

Labour attacked for 'irresponsible' proposal to cut basic tax rate to 10p in the pound

Clarke boasts of families' £700 gain under Tories

By JILL SHERMAN, CHIEF POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH CLARKE led the Tory assault on Labour's tax policy yesterday, claiming that the average family will be £700 a year better off by the general election.

The Chancellor prompted speculation of tax cuts in the Budget by giving an upbeat assessment of the economy. Meanwhile the Prime Minister sought to kill speculation of a snap election by insisting he would not go to the country until next year.

A buoyant Mr Clarke reiterated the Government's commitment to lowering the basic tax rate to 20p in the pound and derided Gordon Brown's proposal of a 10p rate as "irresponsible". But Mr

Clarke refused to rule out increases in indirect taxation, suggesting that he still has little room for manoeuvre.

Unveiling a new "demon eyes" poster on the theme of New Labour, New Taxes, with the eyes peering out of a woman's purse, the Chancellor said: "As night follows day, the tax burden would rise if Britain ever elected a Labour government. Labour have got their eyes on the average family's £700 a year of extra spending money."

Mr Clarke and Brian Mawhinney, the Tory party chairman, argued that new Labour was more "cunning and sly" than its previous incarnation. The two men

made clear that Labour's tax plans would be made just as big an issue in the next election as in the last.

They highlighted hidden taxes such as the "tariff tax" in Scotland, the "teenage tax" — referring to Labour's review on child benefit for 16-19 year olds — the "windfall tax" on privatised utilities and the "private health tax" — Labour's plans to remove tax relief on private medical insurance for pensioners.

Mr Clarke said that Treasury figures showed that by next year the annual take-home pay of the average family would have risen £700 in real terms since just before the last general election.

Mr Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, retaliated by saying that the Tories were still lying about Labour on tax. After unveiling Labour's own poster on the 22 new Tory taxes since 1992, he said: "Today Kenneth Clarke and John Major are themselves descending into the lies and smears that have characterised the Tory party chairman's summer campaign."

Mr Brown also seized on Mr Clarke's failure to rule out further increases in indirect taxation. "Once again, Mr Clarke has confirmed his addiction to VAT and his intention to put VAT on food, children's clothes and newspapers," he said.

At a news conference yesterday, Mr Clarke backed the principle of moving from direct to indirect taxation. But he fuelled speculation that the 20p band may be extended in the November Budget by arguing that getting a quarter of the population onto a 20p rate had helped to "dynamise" the British economy.

Insisting that the Tories were now back to their tax-cutting agenda, he said: "I have made absolutely clear that the target is to deliver a starting rate of 20p. It is credible, within sight, and will be achieved as long as public finances allow it."

In response to Mr Clarke's claim that the average family had £700 more to spend this year than at the last election, Mr Brown said Treasury Chief Secretary William Waldegrave had stated that



The eyes have it again: Brian Mawhinney and Kenneth Clarke present the latest poster in the Tory campaign

living standards fell last year. Mr Brown said: "We know that people are paying £2,000 more in tax since 1992. We know they have suffered 22 tax rises, that VAT has been imposed on fuel, National Insurance has been raised, and mortgage tax relief cut, despite all the promises made in 1992 by the Conservatives that they would cut taxes year on year."

□ Kenneth Clarke infuriated Euro-sceptic Tories by sup-

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ethiopian wins right to challenge benefit curb

An Ethiopian woman won the right yesterday to attempt another challenge to the Government's curb on benefits for asylum seekers after claiming that she had been unlawfully barred from income support. The woman, known only as Ms T, claimed asylum in February, before the Asylum and Immigrant Bill became law. She and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants claimed that the Act could not be applied retrospectively. If she wins, 5,000 to 10,000 asylum applicants could be entitled to urgent payments while their applications are determined.

Patient callers

Emergency telephone lines to provide advice to patients seeking immediate hospital care should be introduced to help to ease the pressure on casualty departments, the BMA said. The hotline, staffed by nurses, would advise patients whether they needed to come in, go to outpatients or to their GP.

IRA appeal lost

The Federal Court of Justice in Germany upheld sentences of nine to 10 years against three IRA terrorists, Pauline and Donagh O'Kane and Patrick Murray, for bombing a British army barracks at Osnabrück in 1989. They had been convicted of attempted murder and spying with intent to sabotage.

For girl

A 14-year-old from Teesside became the second schoolgirl to be granted legal aid to take her mother to court over her rights to see her brother and sister after leaving home to live with an aunt. On Wednesday the Teesside Family Panel dealt with a similar application from a 16-year-old girl from the same area.

Object lessons

Schoolchildren are to be given lessons in the art of complaining in an effort to improve the standard of public services. Teaching material aimed at 16 to 17-year-olds is expected to be sent out to schools before the end of the year to be used in citizenship classes.

Rights ruling

The Government was defeated in Europe yesterday when the European Commission on Human Rights ruled that it acted unfairly in reviewing life sentences. It ruled that the delay of 13 months in reviewing the case of a man jailed for murder had been a breach of his human rights.

Partial eclipse

A partial eclipse of the sun next month will be visible across Britain. The eclipse is due to begin at 1.02 pm on October 12, with up to half of the sun cast in shadow by 2.18 pm. A total solar eclipse, visible from southern England, is scheduled for August 11, 1999.

Medal for poet

The Queen's 1996 Gold Medal for Poetry has been awarded to Peter Redgrove, 64, from Plymouth, a prolific poet, novelist and playwright for BBC radio, was recommended for the medal by a committee headed by the Poet Laureate, Ted Hughes.

Stalker freed

A stalker whose victim suffered from clinical depression after he slashed her tyres and sent her more than 800 letters, has been freed on probation. Gaetano Costanza, 32, who became obsessed with Louise Wilson, 23, had served two years on remand.

Skateboard ban

A winebar owner was found guilty of driving while disqualified after he was stopped riding a motorised skateboard to work. Robert Sawyer, 31, from Fulham, west London, rode a £600 skateboard with a tiny 20cc petrol engine, which police class as a motor vehicle.



Gordon Brown and the new Labour poster that accuses the Tories of 22 tax rises since 1992

THE propaganda barrage between the parties on tax is vacuous, intellectually dishonest and no guide to what anyone will pay in tax after the election. Labour is trying to avoid losing the 1992 election again, while the Tories are ignoring the huge tax increases of 1993-95.

The Tories are repeating their "tax bombshell" campaign of 1992, alleging that Labour's spending plans imply big tax increases. Ever since Gordon Brown became Shadow Chancellor four years ago, his main aim has been to remove the party's high spending and tax image. In one sense, that has been achieved. The pre-manifesto turned

the screw on new spending commitments apart from ones financed by transfers from other programmes or from the windfall tax on the utilities. This has enabled Tony Blair to claim that there are no proposals that require rises in personal tax.

There is no Labour spending iceberg as in 1992. But there are several loose ends, like the utilities tax and the increasingly hypothetical question of a tax-raising Scottish parliament. Some of the Tory attempts to conjure up new Labour tax threats are far-fetched and others distort the meaning of tax. To describe Mr Brown's suggestion

about reallocating child benefit paid to some 16 to 18-year-olds as a "teenage tax" is a misuse of language. It would mean, for instance, that the Government's changes in invalidity benefit could be described as personal tax.

Labour may, however, have made a tactical mistake by repeating its long-term aspiration of having a starting tax rate of 15, or preferably 10, per cent. Even though the cost would depend on the width of the starting band, this inevitably raises questions about when, how much

and how it might be financed. But it is rich even for the rumbustious Kenneth Clarke to boast about the average family having £700 each year more to spend on top of inflation after paying their taxes, when the Tories believe it is individuals, not governments, who create such increases in wealth. The Tories' main contribution to this rise was cutting interest rates from the levels to which they had previously had to be increased to curb inflation.

The real question is not whether Labour's plans are genuine but whether they can be maintained. This is, in part, a commentary on the state of the public finances under the Tories. Labour's pre-manifesto involves no increase in spending above existing plans, but these already imply much slower rates of growth on, for example, health than in recent years. So standards of provision would fall unless big savings can be found from elsewhere. This is incredible given the instinctive desire of many Labour MPs to spend more.

Instead of trying to repeat the mudslinging of 1992, the parties need to explain whether their spending plans can be sustained without

higher taxes, especially since the big tax increases of 1993-95 failed to eliminate the core Budget deficit. Whichever party is in office will find it hard to hold the tax burden at the current level, let alone produce a big cut, unless draconian, and so far unrevealed, measures are taken to rein back the public sector. That is what the Tories should be addressing, as the Liberal Democrats have been arguing from the side of the battlefield. The state of the public finances will determine the prospects for taxes far more than the recent bombastic exchanges.

PETER RIDDELL

Straw promises polls on 13 issues

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

LORD Tebbit became an unlikely ally in Labour's campaign to remove VAT from wheelchairs and commodes yesterday.

The former Cabinet minister, whose wife was disabled in the Brighton bombing, attacked Customs and Excise for ordering the British Red Cross to charge 17½ per cent tax on hiring the items. Labour has seized on the decision as part of its new poster campaign using the slogan: "Same old Tories, same old lies: 22 new Tory taxes since 1992."

Many of the 70,000 people who hire equipment because of accidents or short-term illness, now have to pay an extra £1 a week for a wheelchair or 50p for a commode.

Lord Tebbit said: "It seems plain barmy to me. Here we are 23 years after VAT was imposed, and the Excise people are saying that the British Red Cross have had it wrong for 23 years. People don't hire wheelchairs or commodes for fun. I hope the Chancellor will tell them that they have got it wrong."

Senior Tories denounced as "muddled and ill thought-out" a wide-ranging package of

reforms that includes plans to strip hereditary peers of their power to vote in the House of Lords. Controversial plans to hold twin Scottish referendums on devolution and tax-raising powers for an assembly will mark only the start of a hectic referendum programme in Labour's first term of office.

The party confirmed that a further poll could be held for a devolved assembly in Wales, an elected body in London, proportional representation, a single currency in Europe, and whether to set up elected regional assemblies in seven English regions.

The plans to hold frequent referendums on the setting up of new assemblies are seen by Labour leaders as the key to increasing public confidence on central and local government. Mr Straw said: "We want to ensure that when these institutions are established they really have the consent of the people they are representing."

The Labour Party said that no voter was likely to part in more than four polls.

Cook and Archer canvass expatriate vote in Israel

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ROBIN COOK, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, and Lord Archer of Weston-super-Mare, former deputy chairman of the Conservative Party, have been touring Israel in battle to win over the estimated 35,000 people living there who remain eligible to vote in Britain.

"Anyone who has lived abroad for less than 20 years and remained on the electoral register can now vote by proxy," said Yigal Levine, managing director of the British Immigrants Association in Tel Aviv. "That is why we are suddenly receiving visits from politicians of this stature. It is nice to feel important. It is nice to be wooed."

Before Lord Archer arrived for a tour this week that has included public meetings in Jerusalem, Netanya and Ramat Gan, as well as a speech to the Israeli, Britain and the Commonwealth Association in Tel Aviv, Stuart Polak, director of the Conservative Friends of Israel explained: "Everyone is of the belief that the significant number of British voters in Israel is important."

Not to be outdone, Labour dispatched Mr Cook for a tour ending today which included talks with Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, Yassir Arafat, the President of the Palestinian Authority, and other senior figures, as well as a crowded meeting for potential expatriate voters at Labour Party headquarters in Tel Aviv. His visit is to be followed by a

letter from Tony Blair to every Israeli-based British citizen urging them to vote Labour.

"I only bumped into Lord Archer once — as I was going into see Mr Netanyahu and he was coming out, having only seen one of his aides," Mr Cook said. "I rather relished that."

In Britain, Labour is developing a project, under Derek Fatchett, Labour's chief Middle East spokesman, and Andrew Hood, a senior aide to Mr Cook, to "build bridges" between the party and the Jewish community. According to the *Jewish Chronicle*: "The moves reflect a growing realisation that, while small in number, Jewish voters are significantly represented in key marginal seats."

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Nobleman was buried with Roman board game designed to last an eternity

Opening gambit took 2,000 years to emerge

By NIGEL HAWKES, SCIENCE EDITOR

A MYSTERIOUS board game that kept the Romans amused down the centuries has been found laid out and ready to play in a 2,000-year-old burial site in Essex.

The find is remarkable because, although there is plenty of evidence of Roman games using boards and pieces, a complete game with the pieces set out has never before been found.

It also gives the strongest clues yet about how to play one of the most popular Roman games, whose rules were never committed to

paper. "It is an immensely exciting discovery," said Philip Crumley, of the Colchester Archaeological Trust, who is directing the dig at Stanway, where the ancient British nobility were buried.

"It is the first time that a game like this has been found virtually intact, and with all the pieces in place, just as they would have been in around the year AD 50. What makes it so special is that we have found the outline of the board as well. The original wood has rotted away and crumbled to dust but the edges, which were

made of metal, are still there. We know that the Romans mainly played two types of games: one was a form of ludo, with a dice, and the other was like chess or draughts." The Stanway find is thought to be the latter, and maybe a version of Latrunculi, or little soldiers.

The game was buried alongside the bones of its owner, apparently to provide entertainment in the afterlife. It consisted of a hinged wooden chequerboard and 20 pieces, about the size of large chocolate drops. Ten were made of

blue glass and ten of white. The first move had already been made. Last night Mr Crumley confirmed that another piece had been found, suggesting that there were 24 pieces in all.

What is a wee bit spooky is that all the pieces are set out as if the game were about to start," he said. "They are lined up along each side of the board, with one blue and one white piece advanced."

He said that finding the twenty-first piece was "a bit of a blow at first, but it will be good if we find the rest of the pieces. A total of 24 pieces would fit the pattern of other games that have been found previously."

The board itself, probably made of maple, has long since disappeared, but metal corners and a hinge in the centre have survived, enabling its size and shape to be worked out. The board was 55 centimetres by 40 (21in by 15in) and the pieces are lined up along the longer sides.

The game is of Roman origin, though the burial site is that of a prominent British aristocrat of the period just before the Roman conquest under Claudius in AD 43. Romans had already been in Britain for almost a century, so it is no surprise to find native Britons playing Roman games.

Dr Irving Finkel, of the British Museum, says that, from descriptions of what Mr Crumley has found, he believes the game to be a version of Latrunculi, a game of strategy played on boards of various sizes. "We have found boards scratched on rocks and drawn on vases," he said. "The Romans never wrote down the rules. They didn't need to; everybody knew them."

The important thing with this find is that the board and the men have turned up together. I don't think there is another example like that anywhere in the world. It's a very important find."

He said that the object of Latrunculi appeared to have been to trap one of your opponent's pieces between two

other pieces by leaping over it. It is clearly the ancestor of draughts."

Alquerque is a game of strategy and tactics in which both players have an equal number of pieces at the start. Typically this is 12 on either side.

The pieces are laid out side by side, on the lines rather than the squares," Keene said. "There would also have been diagonal lines, and the pieces can be moved either diagonally or in a straight line. They capture

each other by leaping over

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Lisa Hepi, an archaeology student, working on the discovery at Stanway, Essex.

Twenty of the glass pieces were in place, with the first move already made

Ancient Egyptians and the Moors may have played too

By NIGEL HAWKES

HOW did the ancient Britons play the game? Ray Keene, chess correspondent of *The Times*, believes that he knows. From descriptions of the positions in which the pieces were found, he believes that it is a version of an ancient game called Alquerque, once played by the ancient Egyptians and described in a Moorish manuscript of the 13th century.

"This game was the parent of draughts," he said. "The

Arab name for it was Qirkat, which some people think was the origin of the word draughts."

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Pots and pans chief broke UN sanctions

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A COMPANY director was fined £10,000 yesterday for his part in an elaborate sanctions-busting trade to import cheap enamel pots and pans from Serbia into British stores.

Ramesh Khemlani, 39, managing director of a kitchenware company, admitted conspiring to import goods contrary to United Nations sanctions. His company, Corinna Housewares, of north Manchester, was fined £25,000 plus £30,000 costs. Much of the cookware is sold in big chainstores such as Argos and Woolworth's under trade names such as Wild Tulip and Carmelia.

More than £1 million worth of pots and pans were smuggled into Britain between July 1992 and July 1994 along a complicated route designed to throw Customs and Excise off the scent. Maidstone Crown Court was told.

Khemlani, of Bowdon, Cheshire, was given 60 days to pay, with six months' jail imposed in default.

Robber's number is up after taking a shine to hostage

By LIN JENKINS

A TEENAGE girl held hostage with her family for four hours by a masked gang secretly dated one of the robbers for three weeks before telling police.

Charlotte Lowell, 16, caught the eye of Wayne Girvan as he kept her captive in the kitchen of her home while other members of the gang demanded the cash takings from the bookmakers where her foster-brother was manager. Girvan scribbled his mobile phone number on a piece of paper and added the symbol \$ to denote his nickname, Dollar.

Girvan, 19, apologised to the family as the gang left and offered to repair the telephone wires that had been ripped out. Micheal Greaves for the prosecution, told Northampton Crown Court: "It appears he had taken a bit of a shine to her." He said that Charlotte "rather unwisely" went out with Girvan several times before she told police.

The raid, on the day of the

Grand National, happened after Jason Minney, 29, was

followed home after leaving Tot Bookmakers in Northampton, where he was manager. They burst in armed with a pistol, knife and cash and held Mr Minney, his mother, Jo, 56, and her foster-daughter, Charlotte, hostage.

One of the gang demanded the combination of the safe in the shop. He pressed the gun against Mr Minney's head and said: "We have been following you. We have had a tip-off there is £35,000 in the safe." They took him to the betting shop, taking a taxi after their car broke down, and escaped with £8,000.

Girvan, from Overstone, Northampton, admitted robbery and false imprisonment. John Price, QC, the Recorder, jailed him for six years on the first charge and three years on the second, to run concurrently.

Geraldine Chapman, for the defence, said Girvan had been "roped in" hours before the robbery by the two older members of the gang, who were still at large.

Licence to broadcast for Oxford graduates

By CAROL MIDGLEY

TWO Oxford University graduates celebrated yesterday after being awarded Britain's first full broadcasting licence for a student radio station.

Philip Weiss, 24, and Nick Morden, 22, who operate from offices opposite their old college, Christ Church, proved to the Radio Authority over a 28-day trial period that their station was viable and innovative. Michael Heselton, Tony Benn, Esther Rantzen and Ian Hislop have been interviewed on Oxygen FM, which features debate and music.

Oxygen FM's broadcasting team said 40 per cent of Oxford's 60,000 students tuned in to the station. It has promised to give airtime to student bands and to help to break new talent. Mr Weiss, who gained his politics, philosophy and economics degree last year, said: "We hope to set the standard for a new generation of student FM listeners in Britain and across Europe."

Oxygen FM will have five staff and operate 24 hours a day.



Bill and Ben Wright and the *Wombles* characters inspired by their childhood pranks

THE writer who created Bill and Ben the Flowerpot Men had a dig at the Royal Mail yesterday for overlooking their characters in a series of stamps commemorating children's television.

Hilda Brabham, 82, modelled the mischievous pair on her brothers Bill and Ben Wright and their childhood



Sooty instead. "It's disgraceful," he said. "Bill and Ben is the most famous and popular children's programme ever."

The Flowerpot Men, broadcast once a week in the BBC's 'Watch with Mother' slot, began in the 1950s. In Castleford, Yorkshire, where the Wright brothers ran a greengrocer's shop, it was well

living in Lewes, East Sussex, described the Royal Mail's decision as terrible. She said: "Not only are the stories famous throughout Yorkshire, but also worldwide."

The Royal Mail said that the stamps, which also feature Muffin the Mule, the Clangers, Stingray and Dangermouse,

are to be used to raise money for charity.

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THE writer who created Bill and

Tories 'adopting once-derided ILEA practices'

Schools will be told to target failing black pupils

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

BLACK pupils are to be monitored from the ages of five to 16 under a ten-point plan to combat their declining performance at school.

Ministers acted yesterday after school inspectors gave warning that a growing number of pupils of Afro-Caribbean origin, boys in particular, were failing further behind other ethnic groups. Ofsted, the schools inspection agency, said that schools attempting to create a level playing field for all pupils with "colour-blind" policies were not doing enough to encourage black children. Children of Indian origin were performing much better at school than was the case ten years ago, often better than white children of the same age. Ofsted said.

Cheryl Gillan, an Education Minister, said the findings were a cause for concern. "The Government takes it very seriously and is determined to tackle it. We owe all our children, whatever their back-



Gillan promised that Government would act

ground, the best possible start in life."

Ofsted will be asked to draw up a specific action plan to improve the performance of black pupils. School inspections will have an added focus on racial harassment and stereotyping after evidence in yesterday's report of continuing conflict between white teachers and boys of Afro-Caribbean origin. Statistics are already collected on the ethnic composition of each school but the Government will consult on extra ways of monitoring the progress of ethnic minority pupils.

Mrs Gillan said she was considering how to cut the high rate of expulsions of black pupils, six times that of white pupils. Changes to teacher training were being considered, so that mainly white trainees were better prepared for the multicultural classroom. A task force is being set up with the Commission for Racial Equality. Chris

in the way they could do if things were done differently. No one is suggesting this is because one group of pupils are inherently stupid. What is being achieved by the best can be achieved by everybody. We have now got to find out how to bring this about."

The National Union of Teachers said: "The Government is adopting policies which it once decried as loony left. It abolished the local authority which most put them into practice — the Inner London Education Authority — without ensuring that the good practices from ILEA were carried on."

Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools, said:

"Schools can and do make a difference. But it would be blinkered to pretend that family background and social class and ethnic origin are not also important."

This view was echoed by Carlton Duncan, the head teacher of George Dixon School in Birmingham, who is black. He said the ten-point plan took up recommendations made 11 years ago by the Swann report, the last major review of the school performance of children from ethnic minorities.

Mr Duncan, a member of the Swann committee, said: "An important factor is the absence of the extended family support which Afro-Caribbeans do not seem to enjoy. If schools and others were compensating for that absence we might be seeing a different story." One way of providing this support, more prevalent in the Asian community, was through a scheme of "mentors", whereby successful members of the black community acted as role models for disaffected pupils, he said.

Harry Greenaway, a Conservative member of the Commons Education and Employment Select Committee and a former deputy head teacher, opposed the policy of focusing on black pupils. "I am not in favour of singling people out racially in education. I think children have got to be grouped on educational grounds by streaming or setting," he said.

Education, page 35

White exodus leaves inner cities to ethnic minorities

By RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE white and ethnic minority populations moved apart throughout the 1980s as whites left the big cities for the suburbs according to a government report published yesterday.

As the whites left and the birth rate among ethnic minorities rose the concentration of Asians and blacks living in the metropolitan districts grew. However, although this concentration is expected to increase in areas such as London, the west Midlands and west Yorkshire, the report says that Britain does not have American-style ghettos. Unlike the United States, there are no towns or cities in which non-whites form a majority.

The report, based on the 1991 census, found evidence that some Caribbeans and

Indians were also moving to the outer suburbs and shire counties, particularly around London. Although the numbers were small, Hertfordshire, West Sussex, Dorset, Berkshire, Surrey, Cheshire and North Yorkshire registered an increase in their ethnic-minority population.

The report, *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census*, said that, despite fears that Britain would follow the American model of inner-city segregation, the figures offered a more optimistic conclusion. But Peter Railiffe, senior lecturer in sociology at Warwick University and one of the authors of the report, warned that the concentration could increase over the next decade. "The key question is whether people in these areas will have the wherewithal, economically and educationally, to get out."

Education, page 35

cent for Chinese. The London borough of Brent had the highest minority population at 44.8 per cent, Newham 42.3 per cent and Tower Hamlets 35.6 per cent. But the report said that in five wards the non-white community comprised more than 74 per cent of the overall population.

The report, *Ethnicity in the 1991 Census*, said that, despite fears that Britain would follow the American model of inner-city segregation, the figures offered a more optimistic conclusion. But Peter Railiffe, senior lecturer in sociology at Warwick University and one of the authors of the report, warned that the concentration could increase over the next decade. "The key question is whether people in these areas will have the wherewithal, economically and educationally, to get out."

Education, page 35

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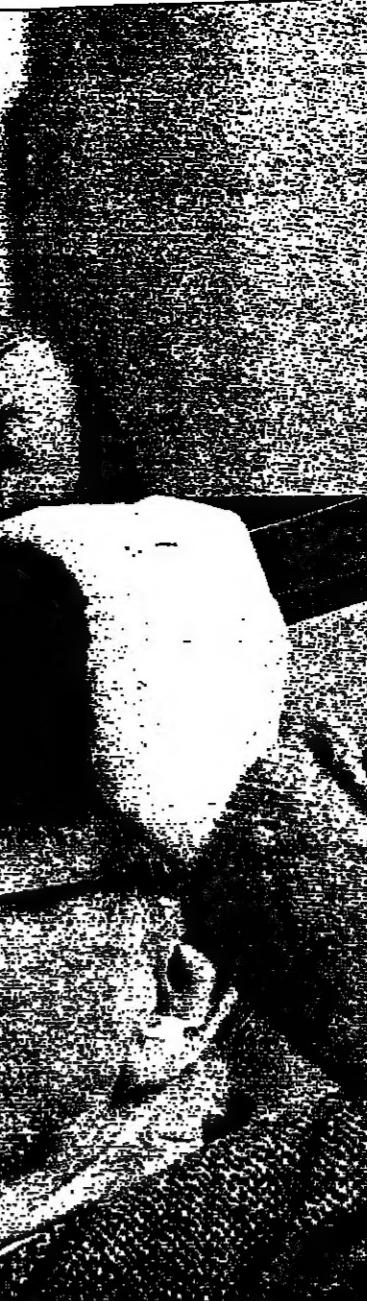
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ADRIAN BROOKS
NEWS IN PICTURES

Governor of suicide jail quits early

The governor of a prison where five women have committed suicide in 15 months is to retire early. The Scottish Prison Service denied that Robert Glen, 50, was leaving Cornton Vale prison, near Stirling, under a cloud, although the latest death there was on Tuesday when a 26-year-old inmate was found hanged in her cell. Officials said that he was leaving so that his successor could settle in us soon as possible.

Bail for accused

Wayne Steven Paley, 23, accused of the manslaughter of Andrew Poynton, a student who was allegedly punched after going to the aid of a young woman, was freed on bail by Manchester magistrates until October 31.

Aerosol death

A 14-year-old Darlington boy died after apparently inhaling the contents of his sister's aerosol deodorant. Carl Lee Cooper was heard crying for help in the early hours of yesterday but was dead on arrival at hospital.

Parents sue store

The parents of a two-year-old boy who lost the tip of his finger in a door at a Sainsbury's store in Lincoln are to sue. A company spokesman said: "Our legal department has advised us that we are not liable for damages."

Long crawl

A rare Death's Head hawk moth caterpillar, a native of Africa, was found in a field near Yeovil, Somerset. The 4in yellow caterpillar will live as a moth for about six weeks, feeding on potato leaves and honey.

Staying safe

Staffordshire University at Stoke-on-Trent has appointed a safety officer to check gas fittings and wiring in student accommodation. Landlords who have been checked will be given safety certificates and put on an approved list.

Sarah charge

A 33-year-old man is to appear in court at Melton, Leicestershire, today charged with the murder of Sarah Bottomley, 14, whose naked body was found in a cornfield near Edmondthorpe two weeks after she was last seen alive.

Roo in a stew

Wild kangaroo steaks from the Australian Outback have gone on sale in 300 Tesco supermarkets. The meat, marketed as a healthy alternative to beef, has ten times less fat than a rump steak and is low in cholesterol.

EastEnders is better, page 16

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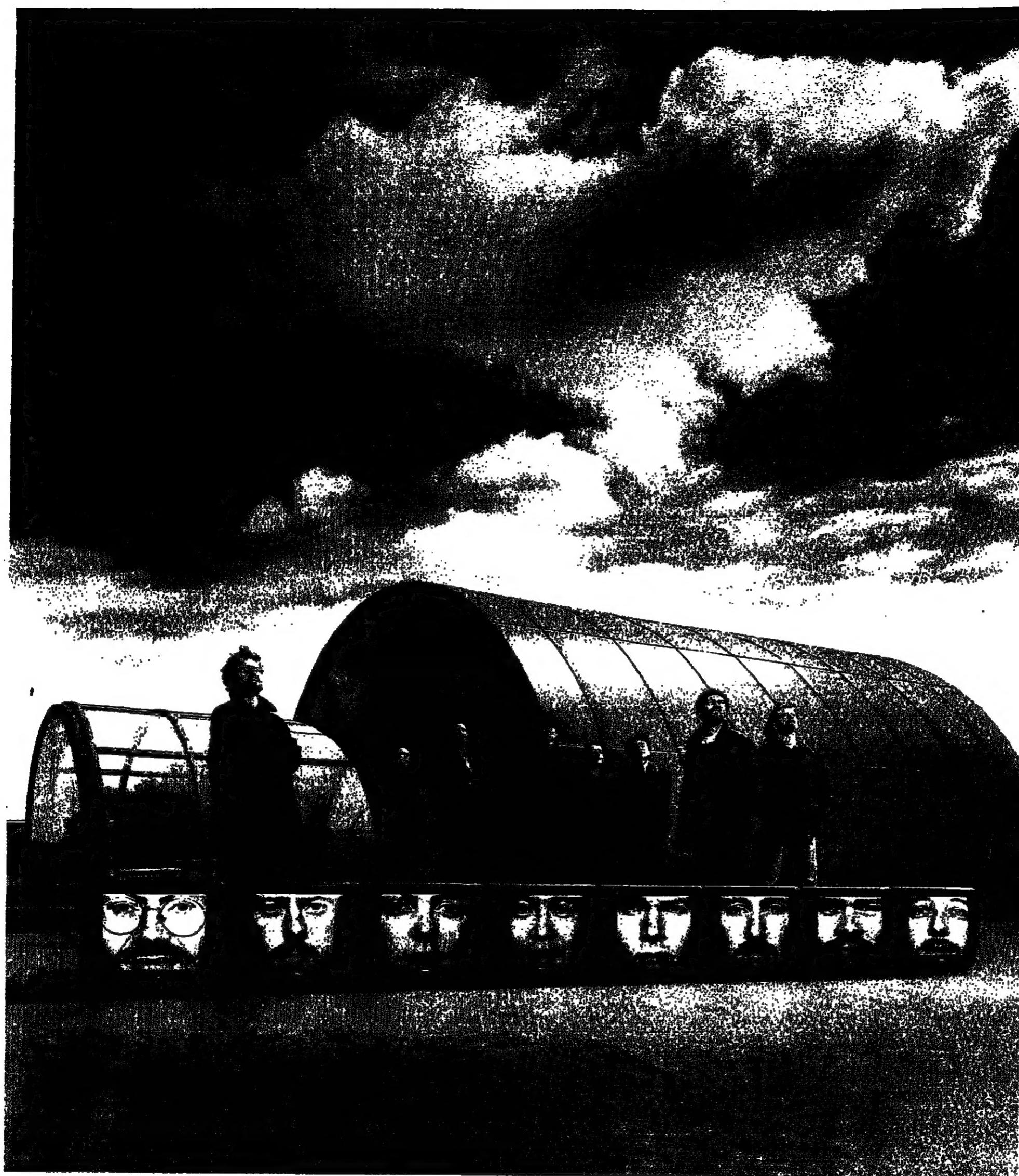
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JAPAN IS SO



Bottom line: Swanbourne Lake has supplied Arundel with water for centuries, but has now turned to mud, leaving André Buller's rowing-boat business high and dry. Water companies deny they are to blame

Water firms accused as Arundel's ancient lake runs dry

A29 Arundel Park River Arun Half mile
A284 Swanbourne Lake Oftham
WEST SUSSEX 427m Castle
Arundel Worthingcamp

By NICK NUTTALL

TWO water companies are to have their licences reviewed after an ancient lake in the Duke of Norfolk's Arundel estate ran dry. The companies have been accused of taking too much water from the lake, which is listed as a site of special scientific interest. They deny exceeding their quotas but

the licences are to be examined to see whether the approved level of abstraction is too high.

Swanbourne Lake, in West Sussex, has supplied Arundel with water for centuries. Over recent weeks it has turned to foul-smelling mud. Fish have died and most of the birdlife has left.

André Buller, whose family has let rowing boats on the former

mill pond since the 1850s, said that the Southern and Portsmouth water companies had been bleeding the underground springs dry. His claim follows a report by government wildlife advisers revealing that scores of wetland beauty spots suffer from over-abstraction.

Mr Buller, 79, said yesterday: "Even last summer, when there

were droughts everywhere, we still had enough water so people could row the boats on the lake." He blames the companies for the damage and an estimated loss of £5,000 after being forced to close during the school holidays.

Southern Water denied that it had caused damage to the lake, blaming last summer's drought and low rainfall this year. "It's

nothing to do with us," a spokesman said. "It is just that the water table which supplies the natural springs is at a record low level."

Simon Taylor, Sussex water resources manager at the Environment Agency, said the agency would hold talks with the companies and review their licences.

He added that last year's drought and the dry winter had left the

chalk dry and that flows from springs had been intercepted by the water companies. "The pumping may be tipping the environmental balance."

Southern Water said: "We have a licence to draw water from boreholes around the lake, but the demand is not as great as we thought and we only take half of what we are entitled to."

Husband kills wife and stabs his baby

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

A MAN bludgeoned his estranged wife to death and stabbed their baby son in the stomach yesterday in an attack at her boyfriend's flat.

Toby Sumner, 26, then drove ten miles to the couple's matrimonial home in Aylsham, Norfolk, where he hanged himself. The 18-month-old baby, Jordan, is recovering in hospital after being found by Kerry Sumner's boyfriend, Trevor Toon.

Murder squad detectives said that they were not looking for anyone else in connection with the killing.

Mr Sumner, who was unemployed, attacked his wife and son at the flat in the seaside resort of Sheringham. Mrs Sumner, 25, had left him for Mr Toon, 25, in April. Mr Toon found her body when he came home from work in the early hours. The baby was taken to Norfolk and Norwich Hospital for emergency surgery. He was said last night to be in a stable condition.

Ella Howes, the postmistress at Aylsham, said that Mr Sumner had been a quiet man. "He was very upset when she left him. All I can think is that it all got too much for him and he just lost it."

The office photocopier could pose health risk

By JEREMY LAURANCE

DOCTORS believe there may be a risk of lung disease from toner dust widely used in office photocopiers.

A 39-year-old man who developed a lung disease after working for 18 months in a news agency probably became ill as a result of contact with the dust, researchers report in *The Lancet*. The man, a non-smoker, developed a dry cough and breathlessness. Tests on samples taken from his lungs revealed particles containing amounts of copper and silicon identical to those found in toner dust.

The man, from Vienna, was treated with steroids but was no better after nine months. He was diagnosed with granulomatous pneumonitis, a lung disease caused by breathable metal particles.

The case is the second in which lung disease has been linked to photocopiers. Two years ago *The Lancet* reported on a 44-year-old Spanish woman who developed siderosilicosis, in which the lungs get clogged with dust, working in a photocopying shop.

A spokesman for Canon Copiers UK said toner dust was safe when contained inside the photocopier.

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America yawns as Oasis fail to behave badly

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AMERICA responded with a large yawn yesterday to an attempt by Oasis to misbehave on stage at the MTV Video Music Awards in New York.

In an apparent grab for controversy — and a higher profile in the United States, where they have yet to repeat their British success — Oasis and their lead singer, Liam Gallagher, went for the bad-boy image with their performance on Wednesday night.

The awards are the pop world's equivalent of the Oscars, and the ceremony was being broadcast live around the world. Gallagher span on stage, threw an empty beer can into the audience, clutched the crotch of his trousers and shouted a minor insult in the direction of the Radio City Hall auditorium.

There was little reaction. A few people clapped, a few more boozed, but otherwise the would-be shocker failed to score much attention.

Oasis were almost universally ignored in reports of the ceremony in yesterday morning's American newspapers. A single line in the New York Daily News noted that

Gallagher's act was a "big down" while the New York Post, reporting the fact that Oasis had actually bothered to turn up, called him "merciful". There had been some slight doubt before the show that they would turn up, but it was never really likely that the band would pass up such a rich promotional opportunity.

News reports concentrated instead on the bad language used on stage by Dennis Rodman, a Chicago Bulls basketball player who wore green nail varnish, matching hip-hugging trousers and a shirt that displayed his pierced belly button.

The Oasis performance bore no comparison to the misbehaviour of Sixties and Seventies British rock bands such as The Who and The Sex Pistols, for whom no gig was complete without an indecent amount of guitar smashing and audience abuse.

Gallagher was more like Alde Jones after a half pint too many of shandy. If they want to benefit from controversy in the competitive American market they will have to behave a great deal worse.



Liam Gallagher: his monkeying around failed to secure much coverage

Both sides condemn Unionist MP for role in militant rally

BY NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

NATIONALISTS and Unionists rounded on a Democratic Unionist MP yesterday after he shared a platform with Billy Wright, the militant loyalist who has been threatened with death by Protestant paramilitaries.

The non-sectarian Alliance Party joined the SDLP and Sinn Féin in condemning the Rev William McCrea, MP for Mid-Ulster, after he joined thousands of hardline loyalists at the rally in Portadown, Co Armagh, on Wednesday night. Their comments were echoed privately by Unionists who were dismayed by Mr McCrea's actions.

Mr Wright, who was given 72 hours to leave Northern Ireland last week by the Combined Loyalist Military Command, was cheered by scores of members of the terrorist Ulster Volunteer Force. During his speech Mr Wright paid tribute to "Ulster's army", which was seen as a reference to the terrorists.

Lord Alderdice, leader of the Alliance Party, described Mr McCrea's actions as a disgrace.

Protestants stopped about 1,000 Catholic football supporters from watching their team yesterday in Belfast. Police moved in after Cliftonville supporters were stopped on their way to The Oval in the east of the city by Protestant semi-final went ahead in a half-empty stadium.

He said: "He is aligning himself with people who... have clearly been fully involved in very worrying activities. He knows perfectly well that is the situation."

Brid Rogers, a leading member of the SDLP in Mid-Ulster, said Mr McCrea's presence was an attempt to exploit community tensions. Francie Molloy, Sinn Féin's Mid-Ulster representative, said: "Willie McCrea and his party refuse to talk to Sinn Féin because they claim we 'support violence'. And yet Mr McCrea shares a platform and defends the right of some-

one who, at the very least, has publicly asserted the right of loyalists to kill Catholics."

Mr McCrea insisted that he was simply defending the principle of free speech and called on anyone with allegations against Mr Wright to lay them before a court of law.

The deteriorating security situation in Northern Ireland was discussed yesterday by Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, and Dick Spring, Ireland's Deputy Prime Minister, at an informal meeting in Dublin. They pledged after their meeting to give the multi-party talks at Stormont a new momentum when they resume on Monday.

In an article in *The Times* today, Sir Patrick acknowledges the harmful effects of this summer's disturbances. But he insists that the Government will press ahead with its search for a political settlement because the widespread view in Northern Ireland was "give talking a chance".

Patrick Mayhew, page 18

THE AIR-CONDITIONED VECTRA PREMIER.



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Now, unfortunately, the bad news. Vauxhall's 50:50 finance offer on the Vectra Premier is only available until 30th September. So, anyone who wants to pay for half of the car now and half in two years time, with no monthly repayments or interest in between, had better get motoring.

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Teacher killed in crash weeks after wife

BY PAUL WILKINSON

A BRITISH teacher working in Africa has died in a road accident, only weeks after his wife was killed in a car crash.

Last night, the dead man's mother, Mary Oates, preparing for his funeral today in Blyth, Northumberland, said: "To think this has happened twice defies belief."

James Oats, 29, died when his motorbike collided head-on with a tractor. His wife, Betty, 31, was killed in her car in June when she swerved to avoid an animal. Both accidents happened near border crossings between Botswana and Zimbabwe.

Mr Oates planned to return home after his wife died but stayed on to help his pupils before their exams. He then took a short break touring on a motorbike. His mother said:

"He was on his way back. The sun was low in the sky as he came over a hill. He must have been blinded by the sun."

The couple met two years ago while Mr Oates was an MSC graduate of Sunderland polytechnic, was working on a Voluntary Services Overseas project in Botswana. They married a few months later.

Mrs Oates said: "James had a marvellous attitude to life. He believed it didn't matter how long you lived, but what you did with your time."



Amy Kelland: abducted

Kidnapped daughter flies home

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

A FATHER whose nine-year-old daughter was kidnapped by her mother and taken to South Africa brought her home to Britain yesterday. Mike Kelland faces a bill of £15,000 after flying to Johannesburg and fighting a legal battle to win her back.

Amy Kelland was abducted last month by her mother, Susan Portsmouth, who was on a rare visit to England. Mr Kelland lodged a court action in Johannesburg and flew out to reason with his former wife, whom he divorced six years ago.

The court ruled that Amy should be returned to her father. Back at home in Tiverton, Devon, after flying overnight from Johannesburg, Mr Kelland said: "It has cost an arm and a leg but it was worth it to get my daughter back."

Oysters on offer from near and far

WEEKEND SHOPPING

THE new season's native oysters are on offer from about 85p each, but the more common Pacific, rock or gigas oysters can be had for as little as 35p each. Victoria plums, cob nuts and English Conference pears are on the fruit stands and the new season's parsnips and main-crop potatoes have taken their place in the vegetable bins.

A minced-beef quality mark is now appearing on minced beef that is certified offal-free, 100 per cent beef and made only from regular cuts produced from cattle under 30 months old. Announced promotions include:

Asda: British rump steak £7.99 for 500g, British lamb chops £7.34 a kg.

Budgens: rindless unsmoked back bacon rashers £1.59 for eight (250g), Cumberland pork sausages 99p for 454g, peppered ham 79p a 1lb, Basmati rice £1.17 a kg.

Co-op: prime young beef sirloin steak £9.89, Cherry Valley frozen duck in orange sauce £2.99 for 450g, chicken nuggets £1.79 for 283g.

Dewhurst: braising steak £1.89 a lb, diced beef £4.99 for 3lb.

Harrods: Scottish black and white pudding 50p for 100g, smoked wild Scottish haunch of venison £1.79 for 100g, Scottish haggis £2.50 each, extra seasoned Parma ham £1.99 for 100g, Italian pepperoni £1.98 for 100g.

Jeanland: gammon grill steaks £1.69 for 227g, cucumbers 29p each, white seedless grapes 64p a lb.

Waitrose: farmhouse chicken £2.65 for 1.8kg, parsnips 69p a lb, Discovery apples 49p a lb, pure grapefruit juice 97p a lit.

Feastland: gammon grill steaks £1.69 for 227g, cucumbers 29p each, white seedless grapes 64p a lb.

ROBIN YOUNG



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P-reg car sales just off 480,000 in August

By KEVIN EASON, MOTORING EDITOR

CAR sales surged to the second highest monthly total on record in August as motorists dashed to take advantage of what could be the last annual registration letter change.

Figures published yesterday showed that 479,407 cars with the new P-registration plate left showrooms last month, an increase of 2.2 per cent over August last year and enough to put car sales on course for two million this year, the best performance since 1990.

Alan Pulham, director of National Franchised Dealers' Association, said: "It is good news for the industry, the car-buying public and the economy. The appearance of stability in the economy, rising house prices and falling unemployment seems to have created a feel-better factor."

But according to the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders imports accounted for 62.8 per cent of sales, up from 60 per cent last year. Of the big three British manufacturers, Ford sales fell more than

12,000, while Vauxhall was down by almost 3,500. Rover, however, managed an increase of just over 1,100.

In spite of the August rise, motor industry executives remained cautious about the underlying strength of sales.

Ernie Thompson, the society's chief executive, said that retail sales were sluggish last month, traditionally the time when private motorists heavily outnumber company car buyers. Sales to private customers totalled 270,978, 57 per cent of the market in a month when the industry would expect that share to be more than 60 per cent. Retail sales have been slow for two years, but have shown signs of improvement in the past few months.

Mr Thompson said: "The good news is that we have enjoyed the second highest monthly car market ever. The not so good news is that the retail market, which has been growing at 10 per cent recently, slowed to less than 1 per cent in spite of the massive marketing campaign."

He blamed the annual registration letter change for distorting industry sales, with about 25 per cent of the total year's sales crammed into one four-week period. The industry estimates it costs £1 billion to store extra stocks, process paperwork and finance, and deliver so many cars in so short a time.

The Government is due to issue a consultation paper on ways to change the registration system, but it is widely believed the P-plate could be the last of the annual changes.

The top ten best selling cars in August were: 1. Ford Fiesta (32,650); 2. Ford Escort (31,461); 3. Ford Mondeo (20,442); 4. Vauxhall Vectra (19,793); 5. Vauxhall Astras (17,392); 6. Vauxhall Corsas (16,417); 7. Renault Clio (14,946); 8. Peugeot 306 (13,980); 9. Rover 400 (13,590); 10. Volkswagen Polo (12,464).

Figures for annual demonstration letter change supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travel agents' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.



Sir Colin Chandler will become chairman as well as chief executive for a year

Vickers advances 18% despite cars setback

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

IMPROVED sales in its defence and propulsion divisions helped Vickers, the defence and hi-tech engineering company, to increase half-year profits by 18 per cent to £32 million.

But profits in the automotive division fell despite strong demand for Rolls-Royce cars. Vickers said that while sales of Rolls-Royce and Bentley cars increased by 26 per cent, profits were held back by heavy investment costs and a decline in sales of high-margin tailor-made cars.

The Cosworth engine division, meanwhile, enjoyed suc-

cess in the IndyCar 500 racing and International Touring Car championships. Its new Formula 1 V10 engine will be used by Jackie Stewart's Grand Prix team next year.

Total sales for the six months to June 30 rose by 11 per cent to £554 million and the dividend by 12.5 per cent to 2.7p. Gearing was 8 per cent at the half-year point. But the shares fell 12p to close at 295.5p as analysts expressed concern over the number of orders for Challenger tanks and disappointment that the dividend was marginally below expectations.

Sir Colin Chandler, chief executive, said the company was looking for acquisitions but no purchases were imminent. Sir Colin will additionally become chairman when the current incumbent, Sir Richard Lloyd, retires in April. Sir Colin will hold both positions for a year while Vickers searches for a new chief executive. Chris Woodward, chief executive of Rolls-Royce, will become chief operating officer at Vickers. Roger Head will step down as finance director next April.

The interim dividend is payable on October 16.

CBI warns Labour on 'miracle cure' offer

By PHILIP BASSETT
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

THE Confederation of British Industry last night warned Tony Blair and the Labour Party against offering a "miracle cure" for the British economy in the run-up to the general election.

The CBI coupled the warning with an equivalent dose of caution for the Government not to put at risk, for electoral reasons, the economic gains of the past three years.

The warning to both political parties came from Adair Turner, the CBI's Director-General, in a speech last night to a group of business leaders in Glasgow.

He urged the Government "not to place at risk the sound basis which the tough decisions of 1993 have now given us", while to the "warmate government" of the Labour Party he gave warning "not to fool themselves that a miracle cure for our economy is either needed or possible".

Speaking at the CBI's annual Scottish dinner, Mr Turner said that, while the UK economy was doing well, it could do still better to close the gap with its biggest competitors. He said: "While relative decline has been halted, we have not yet caught up with richer competitors, with a 15-year growth rate in line with the European average — not better."

To improve, Britain needed continuity, fiscal responsibility and improved investment, he said.

In particular in an election year, borrowing needed to be kept on a steady downward path — "not allowed to let slip and then corrected with a jolt later".

CBI leaders, however, are determined to maintain political neutrality in the run-up to the general election, and, while a statement from Mr Turner warning particularly of the need for continuity in the industrial relations climate was seen as a criticism of the Labour Party, his call for a long-term view of investment was seen as being critical of the Conservatives.

Mr Turner's warning followed a fresh attempt by the Labour Party to win support from business with a rebound contrasted with a 0.4 per cent growth fall in France.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Refuge sets date for shareholder meeting

REFUGE ASSURANCE has confirmed that it is postponing until September 26 the shareholder meeting called to approve its £1.5 billion merger with United Friendly. It was originally scheduled for Monday. The move follows Refuge's decision to bow to pressure from institutional shareholders and improve its offer. The institutional shareholders, which include Prudential, Perpetual, Britannia and Mercury Asset Management, were concerned that surpluses might exist in Refuge's funds that should be attributable to shareholders.

Refuge is now proposing to issue a form of warrant entitling shareholders to any surplus that might become available in the future. Refuge said yesterday that the terms of the proposed merger remained unchanged.

Clothing jobs at risk

CLAREMONT Garments said it was considering shutting its Glasgow plant and switching production to other sites in the North East, putting up to 700 jobs at risk. The company has agreed to a request from the GMB union to look at other possibilities and talks are now under way. Claremont, based in Peterlee, Durham, is a volume clothing maker and a big supplier to Marks & Spencer. It has eight plants in the North East and others in the Midlands and South of England.

Johnson Fry divestment

JOHNSON FRY, the asset management group, is to divest its housing management division, either through a trade sale or stock market flotation. The business directly manages 15,000 residential properties and earned profits of £1.38 million in the six months to June 30. Yesterday Johnson Fry reported interim pre-tax profits of £1.5 million (£1.3 million) and earnings of 7.2p a share (5.3p). The interim dividend is held at 2p.

Seagram sees decline

SEAGRAM, whose companies include the MCA film studio and Oddbins, yesterday reported net income of \$85 million, or 23 cents a share, in the five months to the end of June, compared with \$117 million, or 32 cents a share, in the comparable period in 1995. The five-month period reflects the transition to a fiscal year-end of June 30 from January 31. As expected, MCA's operating earnings fell. Higher investment saw a 19 per cent decline to \$88 million.

C&G cuts mortgage rate

CHELTENHAM & GLOUCESTER, the mortgage arm of Lloyds TSB, is cutting its base mortgage rate to 6.85 per cent from 6.9 per cent. The new rate is effective from Monday for new applicants and from October 1 for existing borrowers. The current standard variable rate is 6.99 per cent. C&G is withdrawing its discount mortgages from Monday and restricting the maximum 3 per cent cash gift to people moving house. Remortgage customers will be limited to a 2 per cent gift.

Rebound by Germany

THE German economy recovered more strongly than expected in the second quarter but unemployment remained stubbornly high in August. Gross domestic product jumped 1.5 per cent, having contracted 0.5 per cent in the first quarter. Separate figures showed that those out of work increased in August by 14,000 to a seasonally adjusted 3.339 million. The unemployment rate was unchanged at 10.3 per cent. The rebound contrasted with a 0.4 per cent growth fall in France.

Fivefold rise at Pace

PACE MICRO TECHNOLOGY, the electronics company, yesterday reported a fivefold rise in pre-tax profits to £18.2 million in the year to May 31 on turnover of £196 million, up 94 per cent. The company said the strong results were due to the introduction of digital products such as decoder boxes for pay-TV systems. The first interim dividend, not yet set, is to be paid in April. The shares closed at 208.5p, down 5.5p. The company was floated in June at 172p.

Sema £62m contracts

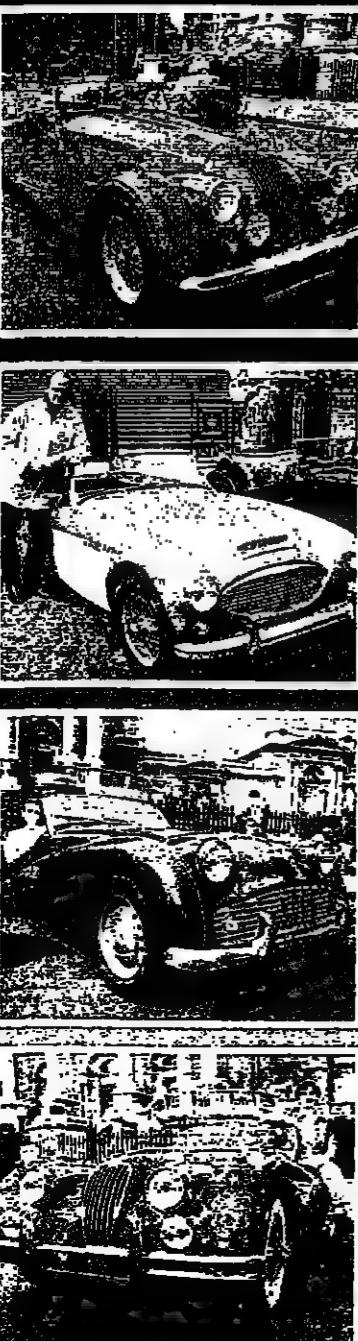
SEMA, the information technology company, has won two contracts, worth £62 million over five years, to provide IT services for two aeronautical divisions of SNECMA of France. Sema made pre-tax profits of £19.8 million in the half-year to June 30, against £16 million previously, on turnover up by 33.2 per cent, to £427 million. Earnings per share rose 26 per cent, to 13.23p. An interim dividend of 2.3p, up 21 per cent, is due on November 1. The shares gained 31.5p, to 77.5p.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

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NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Charity Commission for England and Wales has been applied to register the charity, "The Friends of the Earth Foundation".

The Charity Commissioners have decided to accept the application, and a copy can be obtained by sending a stamped addressed envelope to: The Charity Commission, Poole, Dorset BH12 3HQ.

Creditors are requested to make full details of their claims to the Office of the Charity Commission, PO Box 730, 20 Parliament Street, London SW1A 2BQ, within 21 days of or before, Monday 30 September 1996, which is the last day for making claims. Creditors, persons and partnerships of how and where situated, are advised to make their claims to the Office of the Charity Commission, Poole, Dorset BH12 3HQ, within 21 days of or before, Monday 30 September 1996, which is the last day for making claims. Creditors, persons and partnerships of how and where situated, are advised to make their claims to the Office of the Charity Commission, Poole, Dorset BH12 3HQ, within 21 days of or before, Monday 30 September 1996, which is the last day for making claims. 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Green light may be too costly for Wessex Royal and Sun Alliance waiting game Auditing standards hit by changes

IT IS now six months since Wessex Water said it was planning to bid for its neighbour, South West Water. The prospect of two of the paddling pools of the privatised utility sector coming together had a certain appeal. But then one of the swimming pools, Severn Trent, announced it was wading in. Ofwat decided to call time out on the whole process and pass it to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

The MMC is due to pass its views to Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, by September 27. Wessex expects to be given the green light and see Severn Trent blocked.

Its belief is that the MMC is unconcerned about the possible concentration in the waste business. Although Severn Trent, with Biffa, and Wessex, with its joint venture with Waste Management International and UK Waste, are substantial players in the sector, South West's Haul-Waste is concentrated in its home territory and so there is not a massive overlap.

What is going to excite the attention of the regulators is the coming together of the actual water businesses. Ian Bayat at Ofwat is not a fan of Severn Trent. He thinks it is too big anyway and the prospect of it buying South West, so ending up supplying a fifth of the population of the UK

Problems surface at the deep end

with water, may be too much to swallow. Wessex, on the other hand, has just 2.5 million customers and together with South West would still only be the third smallest water company.

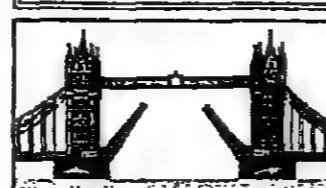
Assuming Ian Lang gives the green light to at least the Wessex offer, there is still an intriguing question as to what might actually happen. As Wessex shareholders file into today's annual meeting, at the appropriately chosen venue of the Assembly Rooms, Bath, they might like to ask its chairman, Nicholas Hood, whether any of the events of the past six months might make Wessex rethink its decision to bid for South West.

In particular, shareholders might wonder what is happening with Wessex's relationship with Waste Management International. It holds 20 per cent of Wessex's shares and 50 per cent of the UK Waste joint venture. But Phillip Rooney, the president of its US parent company, WMX Industries, has said he wants to sell off all its non-core assets and Goldman Sachs has been hired to advise WMX on how it can extricate itself from Wessex. If

Alliance waits for benefits to show

IT will be good six months before shareholders in the newly formed Royal and Sun Alliance know whether the merger between the two insurance giants has been a success. Though the board has made much of the expected cost savings from the deal, its presentation yesterday was short on detail of how this

PENNINGTON



would be achieved. Despite having plenty of cash sloshing about in the reserves, it is loath to grace the market with a share buyback, and said it would be too busy in the short term to think about acquisitions.

The insurance sector is undergoing its biggest shake-up in recent memory as companies struggle to keep down costs while the industry reaches the bottom of its cycle. Royal Insurance and Sun Alliance are the first composites to take the merger route, and have the perfect opportunity to slim down their operations and emerge leaner and meaner than the competition. However, the company is talking excitedly about international expansion without

having put its UK house in order. And there is much to do there: the life company is relatively weak, the direct insurance business needs building up, while motor and household rates show little sign of strong rises in premium rates in the near term.

lawyers and management consultancy fees have created an industry front-runner or a lame also-ran.

Ruining the auditors

BY THE standards of some firms, the £740,000 paid to Colin Sharman is a small tin of Whiskas. But until the beginning of this year, the senior partner of KPMG ran a risk of ruin because of the actions of his colleagues that simply do not exist for George Simpson. The incorporation of KPMG's audit side was designed to take away that risk.

Most people thought it was a good thing. Stewart Colley, of the £6.5 billion British Steel Pension Fund, disagrees.

Mr Colley believes that auditors do their job better if they know that a cock-up would mean that someone could sue them for everything they, and their partners, own. This would mean that in a giant practice like KPMG, a mistake in the auditing of any of the 400 quoted companies could mean that a

tax partner in Welwyn Garden City would lose his home, his car and his golf club membership.

The auditors disagree. We are professional and do a professional job, they say. We work no better with a financial sword of Damocles over our heads. That is why some are incorporating and some, such as Ernst & Young or Price Waterhouse, looking to scuttle offshore to set up in Jersey, Bermuda or, god forbid, the Isle of Man.

Neither solution is desperately appealing, though the incorporation option does have the advantage of giving the auditors a UK presence. Mr Colley's protest may not gain much support from other investors, but it does highlight the question of whether shareholders, who are the real clients of the auditors, get the service they deserve.

Which hunt

SO THE Consumers Association launches a credit card and two weeks later *Which?* says this is a "best buy". What next? It comes out with a washing machine, an alcopop, a timeshare? The credit card should be withdrawn and refunds given to subscribers to the *Which?* money guides. And the Consumers Association needs to act quickly to restore its credibility. Sheila McKechnie's resignation would be a start.

GrandMet starts European sell-off

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

GRAND METROPOLITAN, the food and drinks group, has sold Erasco, its German-based food business, to the Campbell Soup Company for £140 million and plans to sell another ten of its smaller European food businesses.

The move has raised expectations that the group is planning a share buyback, and may seek shareholder consent at its annual meeting in March.

The other businesses to be

sold are expected to raise around £100 million and most of the sales should be concluded by December.

These businesses include Shippams, Peter's Savoury Products, Memory Lane Cakes and Fleur de Lys in the UK; Hoffman-Menu and Goldstein in Germany; Brosard in France and Italy; Suzy and Desobry in Belgium and Drieboek in The Netherlands.

The combined sales of these businesses last year were £370 million, with operating profits of £10 million.

GrandMet will maintain a food presence in Europe with four market-leading international brands.

They will be grouped under Pilsbury Europe, the renamed GrandMet Foods Europe, whose headquarters will be moved from Paris to Uxbridge. The four brands are Pilsbury, the chilled dough makers, Green Giant, the leading tinned sweetcorn brand, Häagen-Dazs ice-cream and Old El Paso Mexican foods.

The food company sales, together with the disposal of the Pearl opticians business in America, which should also be concluded by December and raise more than £100 million, are expected to bring down GrandMet's debts from £2.9 billion to nearer £2.4 billion by the year-end.

On the Stock Exchange, GrandMet's shares ended 4½p better at 47½p.

Temps, page 26

Amec at the double

AMEC, the construction and engineering group, has doubled pre-tax profits to £12 million for the six months to June 30. Results have been helped by record order books — and the sale of its stake in BPMS, the facilities management company, for £38 million last week should help the full-year figures (Oliver August writes).



Richard Oster expects a two to three-year payback

Cookson to spend £25m cutting costs

BY CARL MORTISHED

COOKSON GROUP delivered a rude shock to the market yesterday with news of a £25 million restructuring aimed at reducing costs and streamlining the business. The announcement came as the group confirmed a downturn in its electronics materials division, which has suffered from destocking by customers in the personal computer and mobile telephone industries.

Cookson said that the cost reductions would be implemented over the next few months and the £25 million charge would appear in the full-year accounts for 1996. Richard Oster, chief executive said that he expected a two to three-year payback on the cost of the programme. Bob Malpas, chairman, said: "Every now and then you look in the cupboard or the attic and see that there is tidying up to do."

Pre-tax profits for the half year to June 30 rose 5 per cent to £85.2 million, before exceptional items. The electronic materials division fell 4 per cent to £34.5 million. The interim payout is rising 11 per cent, to 3.9p, from unchanged earnings of 8.7p a share.

Granada plans Spring Grove sale for £136m

BY ERIC REGULY

GRANADA yesterday agreed to sell Spring Grove Services, the textile services company, for £136 million as part of its continuing efforts to dispose of non-core businesses in the wake of its £3.8 billion Forte purchase.

He added that there would be redundancies at Spring Grove, but the number would not be large.

Davis Service, a big operator in the linen rental and cleaning business, is paying cash for Spring Grove. It announced a one-for-three rights issue raising £7.5 million, to help to finance the deal.

George Boyle, Davis's finance director, said Spring Grove was a natural fit with Davis's Sunlight division. Spring Grove has 2,500 employees, 40,000 customers, 14 processing plants in the UK, four in the Irish Republic and two in Germany. It reported operating profits of £10.5 million on turnover of £84 million in its last financial year.

Mr Boyle said that Davis could easily squeeze more profits out of Spring Grove. Its profit margins of 15 per cent are five percentage points



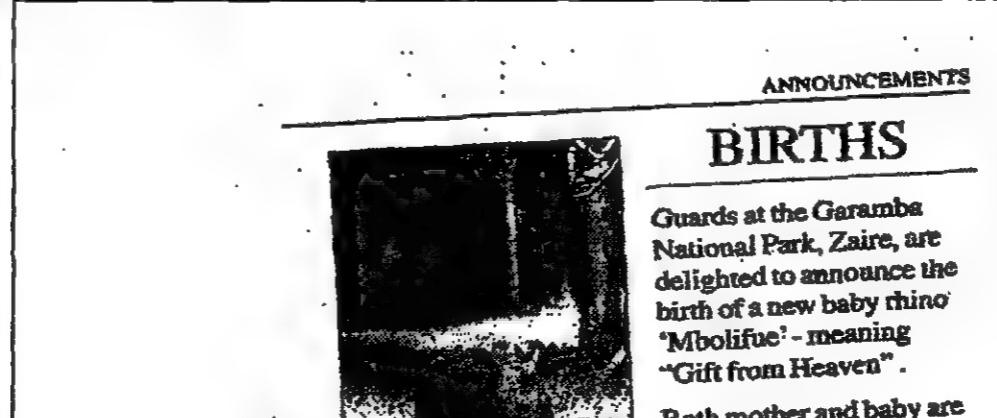
Most people know about phoning The Samaritans. But not everyone finds the phone the easiest way to talk.

There are Samaritans branches in every major town, all with private rooms. The coffee may be terrible, but the reception will be friendly.

You don't need an appointment. And you don't need to have an earth-shattering crisis to share — if it's a problem for you, that's enough.

Look our address up in the phone book. We'll be happy to face things with you.

Sometimes
it's easier
to talk face
to face.



Godparents wanted

For our precious "Gift from Heaven"

Before Mbolifue's arrival, there were just 29 northern white rhinos alive in Garamba; the last surviving population in the wild. You can imagine the excitement when the tiny baby calf was spotted from the air, moving slowly through the grass behind her mother. In March this year, a pregnant female was shot and brutally butchered by poachers. The birth of Mbolifue goes some way towards compensating for

that tragedy but, as a tiny calf this, "Gift from Heaven" is extremely vulnerable.

That's why we'd like you to help protect Mbolifue by joining our adoption scheme for just £2 a month.

In return, you'll receive a photograph of Mbolifue (when we get one!) and regular update bulletins, following your calf's progress. Please help us if you can.

* Unfortunately, the grass is too high at this time of year for us to photograph baby Mbolifue. This picture of a white rhino comes from our archive.

Yes, I'd like to adopt the new baby rhino Mbolifue

Please fill in this coupon and the Direct Debit instructions.

I would like to adopt Mbolifue for £2 a month

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other _____ Surname _____ Initials _____

Address _____ Postcode _____ Tel No. (inc STD) _____

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PLEASE DO NOT RETAIN

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY DIRECT DEBITS

Originator's Identification No. 991472

1. Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch.

To: The Manager _____ Bank or Building Society _____

Address _____ Postcode _____ Tel No. (inc STD) _____

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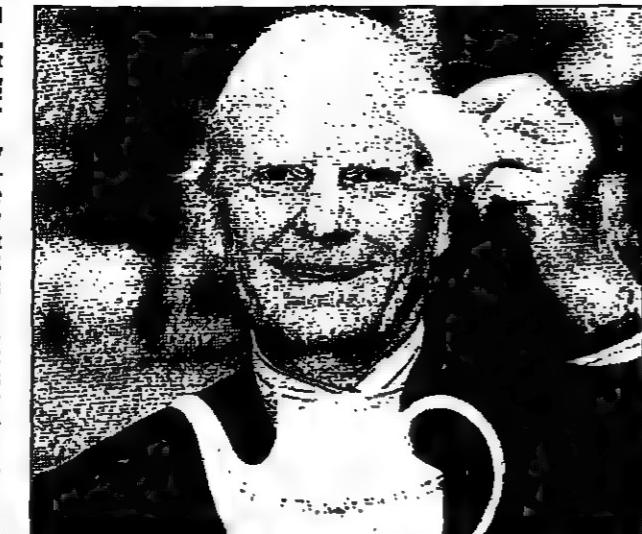
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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Zeneca hits new high on talk of American bid



Good results at Royal Doulton, up 10p, for Mark Burrell

THE equity market closed near its best levels of the day, supported by suggestions that a bid will emerge this morning for a constituent of the FT-SE 100 index.

The spotlight immediately fell on Zeneca, the old take-over favourite that ended the session 43p dearer at a new high of 15.87p, on talk that Warner Lambert, the giant US pharmaceutical group, is poised to offer £23 a share, valuing Zeneca at £21.7 billion.

In hectic trading almost three million Zeneca shares changed hands in a market where traders normally quote in 25,000 at a time.

This latest flurry of speculation emanated from the banking sector, where there were suggestions that someone had arranged for an £8 billion line of credit. Some brokers were quick to pour cold water on the story, claiming it was in fact one bank re-organising its syndicated loan book.

But a leading broker said: "There is no reason why Zeneca shares should be at this level, unless somebody knows something is on the way."

The support for Zeneca also spilled over into Glaxo Wellcome, up 24p at 939p, and SmithKline Beecham, 18p better at 760p.

Elsewhere share prices benefited from the overnight rise on Wall Street and the latest bullish retail survey from the CBI showing sales volumes at their highest level for eight years. Despite an early fall in the Dow Jones average, the FT-SE 100 index closed 14.5 points up at 3,857.2. Conditions remained difficult with turnover at a low ebb, only 66 million shares being traded.

Traders were also keeping a close eye on Lucas Industries down 5p at 231p. The merger with Varsity in the US is about to be completed and the enlarged company could be catapulted into the top 100 index.

Dixons helped to underpin the CBI's findings. It confirmed to shareholders at the annual meeting that sales growth throughout the summer had remained buoyant. During the first 18 weeks of the current financial year like-for-like sales were up 11 per cent and margins remained firm. The shares responded with a jump of 11p at 542p.

J Sainsbury slipped 21p to 375.5p with brokers worried that the group is still losing

market share to Tesco, up 6p at 279p. ABN Amro Hoare Govett, the broker, is said to have downgraded its recommendation.

Grand Metropolitan was barely moved by news of the sale of its Erasco food business in Germany to Campbell Soup for £140 million. GrandMet said the disposal formed part of a re-alignment of its Euro-

pean food operations. It intends to retain the better-known brands such as Green Giant, Haagen-Dazs and Pillsbury. The shares ended 4p better at 473.5p.

Lorries firms up 177p after announcing it had positioned the £700 million flotation of its Metropole Hotel chain after being approached by several outright buyers.

Royal & Sun Alliance went

interim figures failed to match their expectations. Pre-tax profits were up £4.1 million at £55.3 million. SBC Warburg, the broker, immediately moved to cut its forecast for the full year by £10 million to £191 million.

Half-year figures from Vickers, the defence and Rolls-Royce luxury motor car manufacturer, were also given a lukewarm reception from the

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In the net for ING Barings

OUTRAGE has broken out at ING Barings after news was leaked this week that the merchant bank's netball team is being sent on an all-expenses-paid trip to New York. Cries of "injustice" could be heard after it was announced that the sporty gals are jetting off. Club Class of course to the United States. Dawn Dennis, a presentation specialist in ING Barings's Corporate Finance Division, is on holiday and unable to comment, but word from the sideline is that the netball team are having a "good season".

Cuba's finest

PARTIAL to an after-dinner cigar, Richard Oster, chief executive of Cookson, wasn't always a fan of the noble weed. In the heat of the abortive merger talks with Johnson Matthey, David Davies, chairman and chief executive, took his would-be partner to Fox, the cigar emporium on St James's Street, and selected a few hundred of Cuba's finest for the American to sample. Mrs Oster was less enthused about her husband's new passion, however, particularly when the bill arrived. But for the Cookson chief executive, cigars are one of the better ideas that emerged from his dalliance with Johnson Matthey.

LEEDS. the textile company whose shares fell 30 per cent yesterday after a profit warning, was clearly acting out of hubris when it made its last acquisition — of an Italian company, prophetically named Nemesis.


Harrison: non-smoker
Smoking ban

ANALYSTS and journalists walking into Molins's results meeting yesterday will have missed the fog of smoke that used to greet them. This is the first year that the cigarette machine company has banned smoking at the meeting. Since the arrival of Peter Harrison as chief executive and Peter Grant as finance director, both non-smokers the company has cleaned up its act.

WHAT'S in a name? A lot according to MG. Britain's oldest unit trust group, which has fielded more than 500 telephone calls since the news broke at the start of the week that all is not well at Morgan Grenfell. Anxious MG investors asking "Is it true?" and MG investors desperate to sell their European holdings have kept the switchboard busy. One caller singled out David Morgan, MG's bemused managing director.

Drip technique

YORKSHIRE WATER has agreed to pay £90,000 in compensation to the residents of a village in the Pennines after months of disruption caused by repair works to leaking water pipes. Cheques for £60 apiece will shortly be landing on the doorsteps of all 1,500 householders in Southowram. The inconvenience occurred while Yorkshire Water was working on a £12 million pilot scheme in Bradford and Calderdale, to reduce water leaks and establish how best to prevent leaks.

Post Office's future may depend on this dispute with no winners

Philip Bassett
on the stand-off in Royal Mail conflict


Standstill: mail strikes and suspension of the Post Office monopoly have failed to bring out commercial carriers

ground level — managers or workers.

The greatest risk to the Post Office has been nothing but bad news. This early test of John Roberts, its new chief executive, has been handled in a classic way: proposals, offers and revisions. This careful negotiation, taking in the full industrial relations machinery, including long visits to the conciliation service Acas, has looked weak to the Post Office's political and commercial opponents, and, to fundamentalists on the union side, it has appeared that further gains were endlessly available.

The Post Office has communicated its aims poorly. Even after eight strikes, few people are aware of why it sees the principle of US-style teamwork as so important to its future — though lurking beneath the American human resource language is an old-fashioned power struggle about who runs the job at

For business customers, the strikes really matter, too. For small firms awaiting orders or payments, not having the mail come in, in some cases, means going under. In spite of fixes, careful company lawyers still usually require signed paper.

The Direct Marketing Association, representing firms selling to people at home, estimates that each day's strike has cost its members £1 million. Many companies, previously

wary of what they thought were technical complexities of electronic mail, have discovered through the strikes, that e-mailing, once set up, is only a mouse button away, and many will stick to this far-faster form after the dispute is over.

For the Government, the dispute has, up to now, been far from a win. Postmen are popular, and even a string of strikes has not changed that yet, and, in spite of Mr Lang's pithy categorisation of the CWU as a "one-headed" union, ministers have not yet succeeded in depicting it as a villain.

Under pressure from Conservatives still smarting at the CWU's role in thwarting privatisation of the Royal Mail — some of whom see the strikes as an opportunity for revenge — ministers have used the postal strike, and the current rail and now-settled London Underground and British Airways disputes, to widen the argument.

Ministers have scored significant political points by re-

raising, shortly before a general election, the trade union question — winning at least some public kudos from being seen to be doing something by reviewing the question of further employment law.

Indeed, Whitehall insiders

acknowledge that, even with a Commons majority of only one,

a quick trade union Bill before the election is far from impossible — particularly since ministers feel that it could help them to expose Labour Party divisions.

Although Labour has

largely kept its cool over the main dispute, with Tony Blair calling the present package a pretty good offer and urging that it be put to a ballot of CWU members and Labour

indicating that it will review the support for the postal workers if more strikes are called, ministers think a further Bill could expose differences between new Labour and old Labour.

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indicating that it will review the support for the postal workers if more strikes are called, ministers think a further Bill could expose differences between new Labour and old Labour.

However, the biggest failure

for the Government in the dispute has been suspending the Post Office's letter monopoly.

Seen as ministers as the ultimate weapon, its use has been

much less than its threat.

Ministers hoped that just raising the prospect of suspension would deflate the CWU — but that hope has proved forlorn.

Commercial carriers such as TNT and DHL believe that the

suspension so far has had little

impact on the market. Carrier companies — in any case often geared towards traffic to and from Britain, rather than inside it — judge that the big investment needed to penetrate the market is not justified by a month-long suspension of the monopoly, or even any subsequent three-month suspension. To even consider entering the market, carriers would need a full and permanent end to the Post Office monopoly — with TNT pressing the Government for its replacement by a sub-tel rate duopoly of the Post Office and, unsurprisingly, TNT.

This would offer small firms who choose to participate help with the perennial problem of cashflow, whilst reducing youth unemployment and improving the skills of young people.

Small firms are essential to our economy because of the wealth they create, the jobs they provide and the ideas and technology they develop. They have been let down time and again by this tired Tory Government, whose policy initiatives now boil down to raising taxes and increasing burdens. In contrast, Labour is working with business to come up with sensible and innovative ideas to support this vital sector, as well as raising the nation's skills base. Both are essential if Britain is once again to become competitive.

Yours faithfully

BARBARA ROCHE MP

Shadow Small Business Minister

House of Commons, SW1.

BUSINESS LETTERS
Small firms under Labour

From Ms Barbara Roche, MP

Commenting on Labour's manifesto for business, Pennington (September 5) suggests that small firms will be hit by Labour's plans for youth training.

Nothing could be further from the truth. One of our proposals is that small firms who take on a long-term unemployed person aged under 25 and offer relevant training should receive a £60 per week tax rebate which could be claimed up front in a lump sum of £1,560.

This would offer small firms who choose to participate help with the perennial problem of cashflow, whilst reducing youth unemployment and improving the skills of young people.

Small firms are essential to our economy because of the wealth they create, the jobs they provide and the ideas and technology they develop. They have been let down time and again by this tired Tory Government, whose policy initiatives now boil down to raising taxes and increasing burdens. In contrast, Labour is working with business to come up with sensible and innovative ideas to support this vital sector, as well as raising the nation's skills base. Both are essential if Britain is once again to become competitive.

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End gambling in securities trade

From Mr David Bickerton

Sir, Given the embarrassment which Flemings must feel at the uncovering of their own rogue trader in Hong Kong, it is not obvious that employees of securities houses (like their colleagues at accountancy, legal and management consultancy firms) should be effectively banned from trading on their own account in the financial markets? Either one is a dispassionate professional or a punter, not both.

DAVID BICKERTON,
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Letters to the
Business and Finance
section of The Times
can be sent
by fax on
0171-782 5112.

Hopes high as new captain takes over the helm at GEC


George Simpson is renowned for his long-term view

through GEC-Alsthom: telecommunications is conducted by GPT, a 60-40 link with Siemens of Germany, and the consumer brands of Hotpoint, Creda and Xpelair among others are part of a joint venture with General Electric, GEC's US namesake.

High on Simpson's list must be to offload some of the more peripheral businesses. He could go so far as a demerger. But, while on the face of it GEC would lend itself to some splitting, the cloud of Hanso's poorly received demerger must hang over such considerations.

A merger is another possibility, fusing GEC's defence business with British Aerospace. A merger with BAe would bolster the defence side of the business as European aerospace companies increasingly sense the need to consolidate. Simon Fraser

interested in buying the defence division, Thomson-CSF. Alcatel has few defence interests and would probably seek a partner, for which role GEC would seem to have ideal credentials. GEC already has a joint venture with Alcatel in GEC-Alsthom, the power systems business, which it recently further cemented by a move to buy Framatome, the French builder of nuclear power stations. The two partners will try to buy Framatome, in which Alcatel has a 44 per cent interest, after the French Government forced it to relinquish majority control six years ago. It is expected that the dual bid will provide Alcatel with additional funds with which to oil a bid for Thomson.

Further consolidation in European aerospace is high on the agenda of all participants. Europe has much to do to catch up with Raytheon and Hughes in the US and Simpson must position GEC among the frontrunners.

Then, of course, there is the question of what to do with GEC's almost legendary cash pile, amassed by Lord Weinstock. Last year interest from the cash mountain — which stands at £2.6 billion — contributed £15 million to profits. The hoarding of cash has been much to the chagrin of some investors who felt that a more aggressive stance would have delivered a more vigorous performance.

Simpson could return cash to shareholders via a special dividend or share buyback but the chances are he will do none of these things hastily. Shareholders received a 12 per cent rise in the dividend with the last set of results. Profits before exceptional items jumped through the psychologically important £1 billion mark and the order book is strong.

The expectations are high, possibly too high. Activity may be fast in GEC's markets but the new chief executive knows that his positioning of the company to face the next century is crucial.

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IBM unveils \$700 Internet desktop computer

FROM RICHARD THOMSON
IN NEW YORK

IBM has become the first large computer company to launch a "stripped down" desktop computer, which many in the high-technology industry see as the next generation of computer hardware, for less than \$700.

Yesterday's announcement means that IBM has won the race between major computer makers to produce the new type of computer, which is designed to be more accessible and affordable for ordinary users. Although Acorn, a British

company, developed such a computer several months ago it does not have the same market clout to sell its product as IBM. IBM claims the new device will have as big an impact as the original desktop PC that it popularised and set standards for in the early Eighties.

The new machine is about the size and shape of a telephone directory standing on end. It does not contain programmes of its own but uses software downloaded from the Internet. It can carry out the most popular functions of desktops, such as word processing and spreadsheets, but is specially designed to work

with the Internet and internal company computer networks.

IBM is initially going after the corporate market where companies are eager to find savings on computer equipment. The machines will cost under \$700, compared with more than \$2,000 for an ordinary desktop, and will be cheaper to maintain and run. IBM claims they will cost roughly half the amount of an ordinary desktop over a five-year period.

The company will launch a consumer version of the new machine next year. Other leading computer companies are expected to launch

their versions in the near future. The new machines are a serious threat to Microsoft, which has gained its dominance by providing operating software for desktops. The fact that they can be downloaded from the Internet is one reason Microsoft is scrambling to gain a dominant position on the system. But so far it is lagging smaller competitors such as Netscape.

IBM is part of a group of computer companies, including Netscape, Oracle, Sun Microsystems and Apple — but excluding Microsoft — developing common standards for the new computer.

Arjo suffers worst time since flotation

BY CLARE STEWART

A SHARP fall in the price of pulp, combined with a decline in demand, took their toll on first-half results at Arjo Wiggins Appleton, the Anglo-French paper manufacturer. At the pre-tax levels profits fell from £135.3 million to £32.3 million in the six months to June 30.

After last month's profit warning by the company, the market was braced for the figures, but the results still came in just below some analysts' revised expectations.

In common with other paper producers, Arjo Wiggins has found itself squeezed by the impact of a sharp fall in pulp and paper prices and a worse than expected decline in demand.

Cob Stenham, chairman of Arjo, described the first half of 1996 and the second half of 1995 as "the worst period the group has experienced since its flotation".

In Europe margins in Arjo's carbonless and thermal papers were particularly squeezed by the difficult conditions, though improved demand for the high value products of the fine papers division helped its profits to recover. Turnover in Europe

overall fell 9 per cent to £712.4 million, while operating profits dropped from a profit of £38.1 million last year to a loss of £6.2 million.

Results from its French businesses showed a drop in operating profits from £40.3 million to £8.2 million, while in the UK profits fell from £17.6 million to £8.1 million.

A £120 million restructuring programme is under way as Arjo Wiggins seeks to reduce fixed costs and streamline capacity. About 600 jobs will be affected by the changes, the benefits of which, says the company, will be seen in 1997.

In North America, in spite of weaker demand, the picture was brighter as 1995 price increases were maintained and profit margins improved as the cost of pulp fell. Operating profit fell from £62.4 million to £39.9 million.

Profits were also down in Arjo's merchanting business as lower demand and falling prices ate into operating profits, which dropped from £37.6 million to £18.7 million.

There are some signs of improvement in the market. Destocking appears, says Mr Stenham, to be over and the order books are stronger. But he added: "Economic growth prospects through the second half of the year remain unexciting, particularly in Europe."

Arjo is paying an unchanged dividend of 2.90p. Its shares ended 5p lower at 181.5p.

Analysts have cut full-year forecasts several times this year, in the wake of Arjo's profit warnings. UBS, the company's broker, is looking for profits of £130 million, having revised its original forecast of £160 million pre-tax.

James Frost, chairman, blamed Esso's Price Watch scheme for its poor results, as he posted pre-tax profits of £3.8 million in the first half.

FROST, Britain's fourth-largest petrol station chain, yesterday said its decision not to join the petrol price war and guard its margins had led to a 40 per cent volume drop in the first half of the year. (Fraser Nelson writes.)

James Frost, chairman, blamed Esso's Price Watch scheme for its poor results, as he posted pre-tax profits of £3.8 million in the first half.

The group spent £5.68 million on restructuring costs, as it continues to shed the sites bought from Burmah. From 804 sites purchased last year, fewer than 500 remain. The group aims to close further 250.

Earnings were down from 6p to 3.5p per share. A maintained interim dividend of 3.2p will be paid on January 1.

Frost feels price war heat

James Frost blames price war by Esso for a 40 per cent first-half volume decline

Fine showing by Royal Doulton

BY CLARE STEWART

SOARING sales of fine china in Japan and Australia helped Royal Doulton, which manufactures the Royal Albert and Minton brands, to lift its first half profits by 17 per cent to £4.2 million.

Royal Doulton saw sales overall rise by 5.4 per cent to £114.1 million, while earnings rose 20.5 per cent to 53p per share.

Stuart Lyons, the chief executive, said Australia and Japan showed the strongest performances. In Japan profits have risen to just over £500,000, compared with break-even last year.

In America, which accounts for just under a third of profits, further expansion is underway, said Mr Lyons. Nine more shops are to open before the year-end to make a total of 58. He said that sales in America have shown very good growth in the first half.

Royal Doulton is increasing its interim dividend 12.5 per cent to 2p. On the stock market its shares closed 10p better at 295.2p.

Profits warning hits Leeds Group

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

SHARES of Leeds Group, the textile manufacturer, fell 30 per cent yesterday after it gave warning that profits would be significantly lower than last year's £7.5 million.

Robert Wade, chairman, said that the increase in imports of cheaply-made cloth-

ing and the continuing de-

preciating retail sectors in Germany and France had damaged the group's business.

Despite the company's problems, it intended to main-

tain the final dividend, which last year was 4.4p net.

In June, the company re-

ported an interim pre-tax profit of £3.27 million, compared with £3.61 million a year earlier.

Mr Wade said the Strines subsidiary has "been at the eye of the storm". Business with UK customers was down 50 per cent in the past six months.

The withdrawal of Liberty, for years Strines' largest customer, from its fabric converting business has been a particularly heavy blow, he said. He added that he "remains concerned about the outlook for this division".

City diary, page 27



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BRIERLEY INVESTMENTS, the New Zealand holding company headed by Sir Ron Brierley, said yesterday that a strong rise in the market value of its 70 per cent owned Thistle Hotels, Britain's second largest hotel chain, was one of the key reasons behind a sharp rise in the value of its assets in the year to June 1996.

The group also confirmed that it intends to float about 20 per cent of its Thistle stake on the London stock market in October after the launch of a prospectus this month.

Paul Collins, chief executive, said:

"Thistle Hotels' value has materially improved as a result of strong earnings

growth and rapidly improving asset values within the UK hotel sector."

Brierley Investments increased its intrinsic value — the company's own assessment of its value — from NZ\$3.50 billion (£1.52 billion) to NZ\$4.19 billion for the year to June 1996, representing a value of NZ\$1.40 a share, up from NZ\$1.21 to NZ\$1.23.

Brierley's performance was also boosted by an increase in the market value of its 51 per cent stake in Sky City, a casino in Auckland, which now exceeds its book value by NZ\$230 million.

Total net profits fell 28.1 per cent to

NZ\$310.3 million, with dividends received from investments over the year down from NZ\$93 million to NZ\$36 million.

Mr Collins said: "Some of the New Zealand businesses, including Air New Zealand, are presently experiencing rather more difficult trading times due to the slowdown in the local economy and the strong New Zealand dollar."

However, the present expectation is that earnings from operations will be satisfactory in the current year. He added: "The new financial year has started well with Thistle Hotels maintaining its strong growth in earnings."

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE IN SYDNEY

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

Cattles interim rises on better earnings

CATTLES, the financial services group, reports an increase in half-time profits for the six months to June 30. Its pre-tax figure grew 17 per cent to £14.7 million, compared with £12.6 million a year ago. Within its consumer division Shopache, one of Britain's largest weekly collected credit companies, increased its profit 14 per cent to £9.98 million. This excludes for the first time a contribution from Shopaplan, which made a stand-alone profit of £270,000. Cattles said it would put greater priority on retaining Shopaplan customers once it has been fully separated from Shopache. The customer base increased by 13,000 since the beginning of the year.

Cattles' earnings per share were 7.2p, up 16 per cent and on November 4 the company will pay a 2.8p interim, up from 2.45p. Peter Courtney, the chairman, said: "Progress continues in all sectors of the business and we look forward with confidence to another successful year."

Friendly close on deals

FRIENDLY HOTELS revealed yesterday that it was close to a number of acquisitions after reporting a modest increase in half-year profits. Henry Edwards, chairman, said the company was near to signing several deals and would be using the £10 million invested in the company by Choice Hotels, the US company, to help expansion. The company also intends to develop a chain of leisure clubs. Profits for the six months to June 9 rose 3 per cent to £1.2 million. Turnover increased 4 per cent to £18.4 million. The interim dividend is maintained at 2.2p, payable on January 10. Shares closed 2.5p up at 17.5p.

Sanwa files charge

SANWA BANK, a leading Japanese commercial bank, has filed a breach of trust charge against a former official who allegedly embezzled 550 million yen (about £2.5 million). The bank says the former manager of its Yukigaya branch in central Tokyo had run up debts totalling Y100 million in commodity futures and equities. The alleged deficiency was discovered on April 5. Starting in April, Sanwa strengthened its monitoring of large accounts and its internal auditing. The case is now under police investigation.

Ashanti refinances

ASHANTI GOLDFIELDS has refinanced the former Cluff Resources operations in Zimbabwe, trimming interest charges by more than \$1 million a year. The saving has been achieved through a \$40 million loan with UBS and Dresdner Bank, enabling the refinancing of \$28 million of high-coupon debt. The deal has freed \$12 million to fund expansion of the Freda Rebecca mine near Harare. Ashanti has been integrating operations since acquiring Cluff Resources several months ago.

Psion extends range

PSION, the computer company, has unveiled two additions to its range of palm-top computers in an attempt to further boost market share. The Psion Series 3c, an updated version of the Series 3a, comes in two models, selling for £399.95 and £394.95. A new organiser, the Psion Series 3a, condenses the features of the Series 3a into a shirt-pocket-sized format. There are two models, costing £229.95 and £169.95. Psion has about 33 per cent of the worldwide market in palm-tops. Its closest rival is Hewlett Packard, with about 28 per cent.

China must meet criteria

A WORLD Trade Organisation (WTO) without China is a global trade body with a missing limb, but the world's most populous nation still must meet basic criteria before gaining entry, Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, said in Peking yesterday. He cited trade transparency, market access, tariffs and legal structures as areas that needed further exploration. A WTO working group will meet this year in Geneva to try to reach a deal that would allow China's accession, but China said last month its prospects appeared bleak.



■ THEATRE 1
At the Mermaid, Ninagawa's *Dream* mixes visual joy with astounding energy ...



■ THEATRE 2
... while, across the river, the Globe offers a plainer but no less rewarding midsummer night



■ FILM
Christopher Hampton is among those who will present scripts in a new BFI initiative



■ TOMORROW
A skyscraper too far? Can London's city vista take another high-rise monster?

Contrasting *Midsummer Night's Dreams* in London: Ninagawa's superb vision at the Mermaid; Northern Broadsides at the Globe

Yes, yes to the Noh view

Nobody has ever seen a Shakespearean fairy, which means that he or she does not have to be a cut, winged or with an ear for Mendelssohn. Fairies can be acrobats and trapeze artists, as they were in Peter Brook's revival of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

They can also be dreamy-looking Japanese with flowers sprouting from their hair who dance across white dunes covered with red poppies. Accompanied as they sometimes are by a Puck who double-somersaults through thin pillars of light down which sand pours, these androgynous beings do much to ensure that Yukio Ninagawa's *Dream* remains a visual joy.

But his production at the Mermaid is far more than that. The grudging English philistine who lurks in my head feared that a Japanese *Dream* without surtitles would be a long, worthy slog. But even if, like me, you understand little but the occasional "Tighteen" or "Bottom", the evening is irresistible. I cannot recall a *Dream* that so splendidly combined energy and theatricality, ferocity and fun.

The programme informs us that the big pulsular stones scattered around the bare set symbolise "a Buddhist view of the world". So they may. But what we want are fairies who astonish, lovers with verve and pep, mechanicals who genuinely amuse. Many productions achieve one or even two of these things. Ninagawa gives us all three — and to the accompaniment of music that sometimes sounds Japanese, sometimes as if Handel has been collaborating with Andrew Lloyd Webber.

As often nowadays, Oberon and Titania are performed by the same actors who play Theseus and Hippolyta. Unlike many English directors, though, Ninagawa does not use this doubling to suggest that the humans are solving their conflicts by dreaming that they are quarrelsome spirits. Tetsuro Sagawa's solid, bearded Theseus beams

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



WOOSTER. JEEVES LISTEN TO THIS IN THE TIMES.
"JOLLY GOOD SHOW, JEEVES OLD THING."
SURELY THEY MEAN "WOOSTER OLD THING."

JEEVES A TYPOGRAPHICAL ERROR, SIR.

THE ALAN AYCKBOURN
ANDREW LLOYD WEBBER
MUSICAL
BASED ON THE JEEVES STORIES
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BY JEEVES

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happily at Kayoko Shiraishi's svelte Hippolyta — then both are transformed beyond recognition. It is not just that they wear small gardens on their heads. They come at each other like luxuriant titans.

There really is war in fairyland, as the text suggests. Sagawa growls, rages, cackles with glee at the idea of revenge. Shiraishi rasps, snarls and does not soften even when she fails for Bottom. Shaking, gurgling and squeaking, she fondles his ass's tail and grabs him hungrily by the legs. Goro Daimon, whose loquacious weaver has seemed ready for anything, emerges from her bed looking shattered. Thus do Ninagawa's actors bring brashness and bite to often bland encounters.

Yet Oberon and Titania — witness Shiraishi's wincing horrors when she sees Bottom as he is — do not lack humour. Nor do lovers who, regardless of gender, flail, kick and square up to each other like all-in boxers. Nor do mechanicals who invade the Noh-like atmosphere on bikes with modern caps, gaudy pants and, in the case of Bottom, a steel barbecue on which he cooks fast food. The scene in which they cower from the transformed weaver becomes a slow-motion ballet of hilarious double-takes. And for once Pyramus and Thisbe does not disappoint.

That is largely because Bottom's doublets and hose and ever-changing wigs suggest that he cannot decide if he is Barrymore's Hamlet or Irving's Richard III. It is also because Thisbe becomes a dwarfish geisha, a naked Wall forlornly sheds loan, and Lion (or, here, Dragon) is played by a former Sumo wrestler called Ojiyu. When this man-mountain removes his mask and reassures the ladies that he is Smug the joiner, he becomes twice, thrice as menacing. It is a wonderfully funny bit of business in a magnificently inventive production.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Give me a break, Mr Spielberg

Geoff Brown on a season that unearths forgotten film scripts

In the beginning was the word, both in life and in the movies. Many films get no further than the words. The script the writer slaved over lies beautifully typed but stays on the shelf, unproduced. As far as the public is concerned, the script never existed. Until now, for a new initiative by the British Film Institute, the Script Factory, is about to unfold, offering professional public readings of British film scripts awaiting under its director-in-waiting, Hugh Hudson.

Conrad's novel *Nostromo* has been spectacularly unlucky in its journey to the screen. Losey, uncrowned king of the unmade film, tried to mount a version in the 1950s. Thirty years later, David Lean got going with a Hampton script, but delays and worries over Lean's health hastened the project's cancellation. After Lean died, Hampton re-worked his script for Hudson; that script, too, is now stalled over funding.

Most readings will take place at London's October Gallery. Admission costs £10, rather more than a West End cinema ticket, though supper is thrown in plus the chance to make a movie in your head.

Charlotte MacLeod, the organiser, has arranged similar events in New York, where every waiter has a script ready to foist on a producer dining out. There is no shortage of material in Britain either: films that never get made far outnumber those that do.

Established writers fall by the wayside just as often as writers eager to make their mark: having a masterly script by Harold Pinter did nothing to help Joseph Losey to bring Proust to the screen. In the Script Factory season, Royal Court playwright Nick Gross is offering his first cinema project.

• The Script Factory opens on Sept 25 at the October Gallery, 24 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1 (0171 580 1052).



Movie hopefuls: Christopher Hampton and Allan Scott



Kayoko Shiraishi as Titania, Goro Daimon as Bottom, in Yukio Ninagawa's stunning production at the Mermaid

It works like a dream without costumes, too

Barry Rutter's splendid company, Northern Broadsides, returned on Monday from a successful tour of Brazil to give a single performance at the Bankside Globe — and when Rutter's Oberon walked on stage for the second half, in his black coat pinned with coloured favours and a flowery hat topped with pheasant feathers, he was rewarded with cheers from groundlings and galleries alike. He smiled almost sheepishly, recognising that it was the entrance of the coat and hat that had earned the applause.

British Airways managed to lose the company's three cases of costumes somewhere between Rio and Heathrow, and the cast were obliged to perform in the clothes they arrived in. So Lysander and Demetrius looked more alike than usual in T-shirts sporting the company's logo, a Yorkshire boar, and the mechanicals became fairies by changes of stance and motion alone.

The costumes arrived just in time for the ass's headdress, a sort of pixie hood with ears, to be fitted on to Peter Gunn's Bottom, where it made him look not so much like a vile thing — although fairy aesthetics may be different from ours — as ridiculously self-satisfied in his ignorance. "Lead him to my bower," commands Isabella Bennison's Titania in her earthiest, harshest tones, and Gunn is borne off backwards on a trolley, complaisant and complacent to the end.

This round O of a theatre

JEREMY KINGSTON

has already proved itself an admirable arena for soliloquy, and Rutter's production suggests that it may also become a theatre unrivalled for rumbustious comedy. The rapport that springs up between the actors and audience is astonishing. It does not build up, it is there from the start, and the only theatrical equivalent is the very best of community pantomime. When Lysander thrusts Hermia away, "Get you gone, you dwarf!", the audience utters a mock-disapproving "Oh!", and it lets out a sigh of pleasure when John Gully's Demetrius, speaking with great tenderness, tells of his recovered love for Helena.

These responses come served with irony but there is nothing self-conscious about the audience's bursts of laughter, relishing both the comedy in the text and vocal inflection that director and cast create from this. The evening is larded with happy jokes: the lullabies, the mechanicals reluctant to break from a tight line, Bottom overwhelming Duke Theseus with literary expertise. Helena and Hermia did not always have the measure of this well-known yet unfamiliar shape of theatre, but this is a technical matter that actors will learn. The gentleness entering into Rutter's voice when talking of the natural world suggests that even a whisper might carry to the upper gallery of this good-hearted theatre, brand new but already an old friend.

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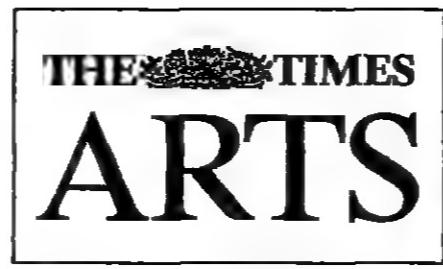
CHOICE 1

Alan Howard plays Oedipus as the National Theatre stages Sophocles' *Sophocles*



CHOICE 2

Josie Lawrence stars in an updated version of Jonson's *Alchemist*



OPERA

David Freeman produces an economy package staging of *The Magic Flute* on the South Bank



PROMS

The Albert Hall hears late-night performances of new works by James MacMillan and James Dillon

LONDON
BBC PROMS 26: The conductor Valery Gergiev, in his Proms debut, conducts the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra in two concerts, today and tomorrow. *Exodus*, with soloists Daniel Behr, *The Merchant of Venice*, Stéphane Séneca, Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No 2* (solos Alexander Toradze) and Stravinsky's *Agon*. Tomorrow, at 7.30pm, Prokofiev's conflict-hidden Sixth Symphony is played alongside Edouard Deldevez's *Les Passions* and Anna Nechaeva's elegant solo Debussy's evocative *La Mer*. Then, on Sunday, 7.30pm, David Atherton conducts the BBC Singers in a programme of Spanish songs and operatic arias. Tickets £10-£12, Royal Festival Hall, London SW7. (0171-923 2121). Tonight-Sun.

WIGMORE HALL: Returns only for the opening concert of the 1996 season. The Wigmore Hall Singers perform Sophie von Otter's songs by Alfvén, Sibelius, Grieg, Schubert and Strauss. Accompanied by Bengt Forsberg, piano. Wigmore Hall, Wigmore Street, W1. (0171-933 2141). Tomorrow, 7.30pm.

EDUCATION

John O'Leary reports on the problems facing staff, and two men who gave up teaching describe the pressures

Why are our teachers leaving?

Thousands of teachers have been trying to come to terms with life outside the classroom as their former colleagues returned to school this week. Many had reached retirement age, but three-quarters have put a premature end to a career they saw as a life-long vocation.

The image of teaching as a secure, even sedate, occupation with short working hours and long holidays is receding fast. The squeeze on state school budgets has accelerated the pace of early retirements, but the most striking change has been the rise in stress-related illness.

The condition makes its roads into every profession, but the figures for teaching — and for head teachers in particular — are extraordinary. More staff left the profession because of "infirmity" than reached the age of retirement last year.

In 1979 fewer than 1,400 teachers retired early through ill-health. By 1995, the figure had reached almost 6,000, a quarter of all those leaving the profession, and would have been higher if the Teachers Pension Agency had not tightened up the interpretation of its rules. The agency rejected 10 per cent of applications, compared with the normal 3 per cent. The attrition rate is such that some private insurers are reluctant to accept teachers for "living cover" policies. The Teachers Superannuation Fund, already more than £1.5 billion in debt, is in more trouble year by year.

Most of those joining the stampede from the classroom cite stress as the underlying reason. Medical certificates may list more conventional illnesses, but the extra demands on today's teachers produce pressures that many cannot withstand. Stress may be a Nineties state of mind that would once not have been

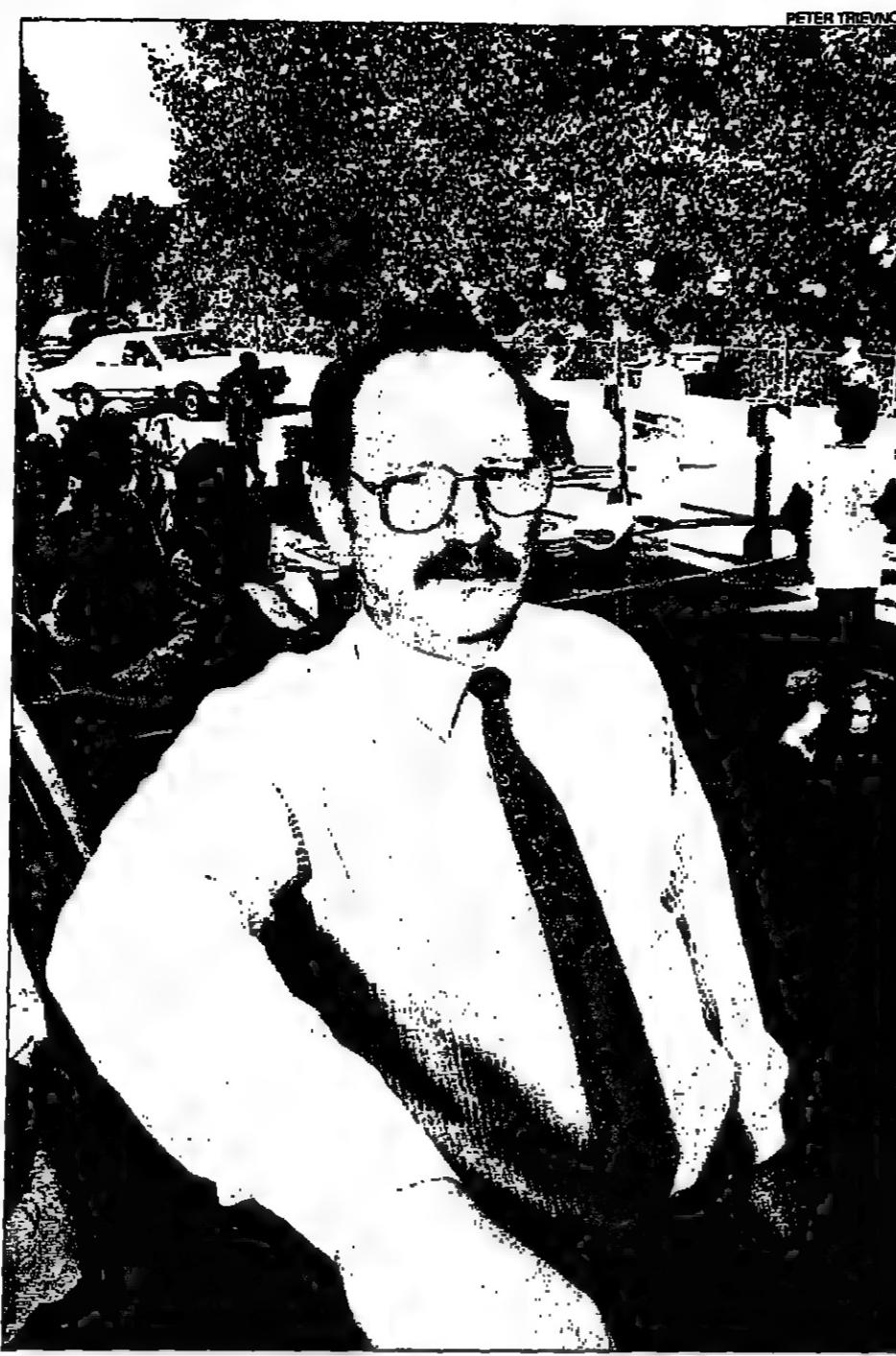
accepted as a career-threatening condition. But it is equally certain that teaching is not what it was when many of the victims joined the profession. Extra workload, worsening discipline problems, tension generated by inspections and heightened expectations by parents and senior staff are all raising the classroom temperature.

In a report on the subject, academics at Oxford Brookes University said that the strains of the job were causing heart attacks and strokes, "Panics attacks, sleeplessness, broken relationships, excessive drinking and smoking, loss of confidence and breakdown are not reportable industrial illnesses," the survey said. "But they are as devastating to the teacher as broken arms, amputations and poisonings are to other workers."

Head teachers, weighed down by extra responsibilities since taking control of school budgets, prone to conflict with parents and governors, worried about league tables and inspection reports, are under even more pressure. Their deputies are becoming increasingly reluctant to apply for the top jobs.

In the teaching profession as a whole, more than 150,000 people have left prematurely in the past ten years, three times the number reaching retirement age. Applications for ill-health retirement have risen by almost a quarter in two years.

What is worse, the message seems to be affecting the people who should form the next generation of teachers. Though the starting salary is relatively attractive, applications for training are falling as the graduate employment market begins to recover. Young people are asking themselves whether it is worth joining a profession under pressure, and growing numbers are deciding that it is not.



Graham Went, Headmaster, Edinburgh Primary School, Walthamstow: someone had to go

Too much work, too little praise — I've had enough



John Miller: a changed atmosphere

I HAD been thinking of giving up teaching for two or three years when my parents' illnesses and the fact that the school was seeking redundancies to cope with a budget cut triggered my decision.

Teaching is simply not the same job I came into 13 years ago. The pressure has increased enormously and there is no time to develop a relationship with the children or to bring a bit of individuality to the subject.

I taught French and German at Moorside High School, a large comprehensive in Stoke-on-Trent, where I have spent the past nine years. At 41, I had reached the top of the classroom teachers' pay scale and, as a single man, I have no complaints about the money — £21,000 a year. But I have

felt the stress of the job more and more in the past few years as there has been more emphasis on meeting targets and running the school as a business.

The atmosphere has changed. There never seems to be any praise; and there were always extra things that I should have been doing. In my own subject, for example, teaching methods are more and more laid down in a politically correct way. There is no fun. Lessons must be conducted in the language being taught and it is frowned upon if you lapse back into English to make sure that the children understand what you are saying.

The workload has certainly increased. When I first came into teaching, you would get 40 minutes or an hour's break at lunchtime when

people might have a game of cards in the staffroom. Now most teachers do not go to the staffroom; they are too busy preparing afternoon lessons or dealing with pupils.

On top of that, I was probably doing a weekly average of between ten and 12 hours' work at home. I keep one night a week free for the choir and operatic society to which I belong, but work was occupying more and more of my time.

Colleagues were very supportive because they know the pressures of the job. I do not know what the future will hold — I would like to use my languages in an office setting, but I will clean toilets if necessary. I don't expect to go back to teaching.

JOHN MILLER

Pressure that led the head to quit

UNTIL Ofsted's inspectors arrived at my school, I had never considered giving up my headship. It was hard work and long hours, certainly challenging, but it was a job that I enjoyed.

Everything changed when the school was found to require "special measures" (Ofsted jargon for failure). The pressure, the workload and the staff demoralisation that ensued were amazing. I gave it a few months to see how parents and governors would react, and they were extremely supportive, but by the turn of the year I came to the conclusion that the school needed someone who didn't carry the baggage of the past.

People have said it was a courageous decision, but it merely seemed sensible if the school was to get out of special measures. The parents were confused, because the report didn't match their experience of the school. But whatever I might think of the inspection system, the school has to go forward.

I was not criticised personally, but it is implicit when a school is put under special measures that the responsibility lies with the head teacher. It seems part of the hidden agenda that someone has to go.

I had intended to leave at Easter, but I agreed to stay on for another term so a permanent successor could be appointed. It means 65-hour weeks with weekend working. Without the support of my wife and six children, it would have been difficult indeed. As it was, I didn't crack up, but that is not to say I could go on indefinitely without its having a damaging effect on my health. Now I want a break I need time to consider what I want to do. It would be nice to have a job that you don't bring home, but I haven't ruled out a return to teaching or even headship at some time in the future.

In the short term, supply teaching might be good for me. After 20 years in the same school, as deputy and then head, there is a danger of tunnel vision. Another suggestion has been to train as an Ofsted inspector. But would it feel as though I was joining the enemy?

GRAHAM WENT

A nation forgetting how to walk

Susan Elkin on the dangers of raising a sedentary generation

HARDLY a month goes by without the publication of another report telling us what we know — that schoolchildren are unhealthy and becoming more so all the time. For reasons that are many and various, they now eat so much "junk". It seems that many of them are reaching the paradoxical position of being both malnourished and overweight.

Combine that with the fact that few children are encouraged — or even allowed — to walk or cycle anywhere and you have an ill-health time-bomb ticking away. By the time today's schoolchildren are in their forties, we shall be a very sickly nation — unless we can stop the rot.

Schools could do a lot more to promote sensible exercise. And I don't mean the flamboyant and noisy razzmatazz of aerobic exercise to thumping pop music or "working out" in expensive gyms. Either. No, I have something much simpler in mind.

Why aren't schools simply "walking" schools? Doctors say that it is the best possible exercise. Walking is steady and continuous, it helps with weight control, it is companionable and it costs nothing. In fact, it saves money and resources: the walker saves transport expenditure and is also, in a wider context, environmentally responsible, because everyone who walks, as opposed to getting into a powered vehicle, is helping to reduce fuel consumption.

Children used to walk almost everywhere. Now, fewer than 10 per cent arrive at school as unaccompanied pedestrians. And it isn't many more who go to school on foot even in the company of an adult. Witness the dangerous congestion caused by cars near school gates. Yet most British children live less than a mile from their schools.

The secondary school I attended was about half a mile up a steep hill. Some buses stopped at the bottom and it was tempting to hop on a second bus for the last lap. Woe betide us if our



School End

on terra incognita for much of the time. Yet at no point were we more than a mile or two from most of their homes. We named trees, spotted wildflowers, learnt a bit about map-reading and got a good afternoon's healthy exercise.

The other day, I met an Oxford Classics graduate who told me, shamelessly, that having always lived in cities she cannot identify a primrose. At the other end of the scale, I recently asked a low-skill class to draw some daffodils to illustrate Wordsworth's poem. They couldn't. They hadn't a clue what a daffodil was.

While we condone the fashionable idea that exercise has to be wildly exciting, more and more of our children will continue to opt out. Munching their crisps and slurping sugary drinks as they slumped before the television set, they are getting fatter in body but narrower in outlook by the minute.

Secrets of a comprehensive success

Malbank beat Haileybury and Stowe in A-level rankings even though it raised its pupil numbers. Bruce Kemble explains how

DISPLAYED proudly on the wall of the headmaster's study is the school motto, with all its echoes of Margaret Thatcher's triumphant urgings during the Falklands crisis: "Gaudeamus" (Let us rejoice!) The head, Allan Kettleday, has much cause for rejoicing as he shows visitors a recent award from Oxford University which will be given annually to sixth-former in recognition of the school's "outstanding record" in providing the university with first-class students.

He is also pleased with his achievement of raising the number of pupils from 850 to 1,216, an increase of nearly 50 per cent during his five years there. This startling proof of the school's popularity is illustrated by parents putting their children's names down for entry at 11 when they are only two.

Yet this is not an ancient public school, or even a grammar school, but a state comprehensive where 7 per cent of children qualify for free school meals. It is Malbank School in Nantwich, Cheshire, which was the leading comprehensive in The Times A-level rankings. Its high position astonished John Rae, the veteran public school head, who asked on this page "How does a comprehensive such as Malbank School in Cheshire, for example, so easily beat Haileybury and Stowe?" Nearly three-quarters of Malbank's 149 candidates gained four passes and 13 won five or six A grades.

Mr Kettleday, 45, says: "The number of youngsters getting five As has increased marginally and the average points score has increased significantly. But at the lower end, without any change in admissions policy and still entering every student for the examinations, we are now down to only one candidate who didn't get any A levels at all." He is particularly delighted that in the lower-ability range, pupils do not drop out.

Had the council waited, the school would be a grammar

Mr Kettleday argues that the school deserves some of the credit. "I get a bit miffed at the idea that they're clever kids who'd have done well anywhere," he says. "All the evidence shows that that is simply not the case."

Barbara Shaw, 46, whose sons Andrew and Alexander go there, agrees with him and recalls the days when Malbank's rivalry with nearby Brine Lees school, an 11-16 comprehensive school, was serious. "Seven years ago, people used to say, 'Does my child go to Brine Lees or Malbank?' Now there's no question. Malbank is a very happy school. The children are very disciplined, the teachers have expectations."

Lucy O'Grady, 18, is the daughter of a tax inspector and lives in Crewe. She got four A-level passes and is now off to read psychology at



Allan Kettleday of Malbank School: "outstanding record" in providing Oxford with first-class students

who gets frightened and says you can't have a minute's silence with 1,200 children."

It is the result of the absorption of the traditional values of the grammar school it used to be. The school went comprehensive in 1977, but if the Conservative council had waited a little over a year, Malbank would still be a grammar school. As Ernest Lightfoot, a 65-year-old governor and former schoolmaster, says: "Even though it's Malbank Comprehensive, for many it's still the grammar school it was."

CHRIS LOUISON/NEWS TEAM

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Centurion Gooch overtakes a fellow old master

By ALAN LEE
CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

EDGBASTON (third day of four): Warwickshire, with seven second-innings wickets in hand, need 371 runs to beat Essex

EDGBASTON has never been a lucky ground for Graham Gooch. He was twice out for nought here on his Test debut and, after 23 seasons of trying, he had made only one century, 19 years ago. He was unlucky yesterday, too, in being run out at the non-strikers end while backing up, but by then he had completed the 12th century of his career and given Essex a winning position against Warwickshire.

This match has been transformed by sunshine. For five sessions, under low cloud, it looked most unlikely to run a full course as batsmen rapidly lost either their wicket or their dignity to exaggerated movement. Then the skies cleared and the bowlers' brows began to furrow. By tea-time yesterday, with Essex on 401 for three, Warwickshire were waiting for the merciful release of a declaration.

It came with an hour of the day remaining and left the outgoing champions an hour and a full day to make 436. A tall order, of course, and now entirely beyond them. A sprightly opening stand raised 36 in six overs but three wickets then fell within six balls. Essex should win

with time to spare now, maintaining their challenge for Warwickshire's title.

To say that Gooch held the key to the game is to repeat a cricketing cliché. Down the decades, there have been few more influential English players. Now, his authoritative 147, the seventh century of a season which he began convinced it would be his last, deflated a Warwickshire side that had competed spiritedly for two days.

Already this summer, Gooch had overtaken Tom Graveney and Dennis Compton to move into the top ten prolific centurions. Yesterday, he went past W. G. Grace. Gooch's gait suggests he sometimes feels as old as W. G. looked, but he has, in

fact, played 526 fewer innings, which puts his record into awesome perspective.

Resuming on 58, he reached three figures with negligible fuss and one memorable stroke. Munton, for whom this has been a chastening game, dropped short and Gooch, in position without discernible foot movement, clubbed the ball contemptuously over mid-wicket for six. He received the applause for his century, perfunctorily, routinely called for fresh gloves and then played a sequence of dismissive shots against Neil Smith.

There seemed no way Warwickshire could dismiss him until a straight drive from Paul Prichard was deflected into the bowler's

stumps by Brown. Gooch had off, his job done and a blemish on his career record removed. Until yesterday, he had managed only 596 runs against Warwickshire out of a career total of almost 44,000.

Gooch had shared stands of 89 with Hussain and 111 with Prichard, his successor as captain. In his stead, Prichard proceeded to a century of his own, his first of what may yet be a season of high personal fulfilment. As the bowling became wayward and the fielding desultory, Warwickshire's cricket adopted a fatalism that they avoided in better times. Since Pollock went home, their attack has lacked an edge but, if they sought hope for the future, it was out there with them yesterday, as Allan Donald, who will be back in the side next year, spent a session as fielding substitute.

Ronnie Irani added 139 with Prichard and looked destined to make the day's third century when Prichard declared. In truth, he had delayed longer than was necessary, though no longer than was psychologically desirable to examine Warwickshire's resolution fully.

Briefly, it seemed strong, but Neil Williams intervened crucially. Moles was taken at short leg and Wasim Khan suffered the experience of many a first-innings centurion on falling for nought, leg-before second ball. Knight then played no stroke to Such's arm ball and Warwickshire were in steep decline.

Leicestershire held up by Tolley as vital win beckons

By SIMON WILDE

TRENT BRIDGE (third day of four): Nottinghamshire, with two second-innings wickets in hand, are 14 runs ahead of Leicestershire

A DRAMATIC collapse in the final session of the day by Nottinghamshire has left Leicestershire in sight of a victory that would put them top of the Britannia Assurance county championship table this morning.

If Derbyshire subsequently win at Taunton, they will slip back to second place; but if not, Leicestershire's destiny will fall into their own hands. Maximum points from their remaining fixtures, against Durham at Chester-le-Street and Middlesex at Grace Road, would make them champions for only the second time.

When tea was taken, Leicestershire appeared to face a long haul, stretching well into today. Nottinghamshire were 89 for two, still 26 in arrears, on a pitch offering only a little help to the spin bowlers. Robinson had dug himself in for his umpteenth rearguard action at Trent Bridge.

Then, in the span of one disastrous hour — not the first they have had recently — Nottinghamshire lost six wickets in only seven runs, in front, and such was the rattle of wickets that a three-day defeat looked a probability rather than a possibility, before spirited batting by Tolley, for the second time in the match, not only stopped the rot but saw 67 runs added

in positive fashion in the final hour as Bates and Bowen provided gallant support. Nothing in the tail does, though, can disguise the woeful lack of application among Nottinghamshire's top-order batsmen. Robinson was exonerated yesterday but neither he nor any of the others playing here has scored a championship century in the six defeats the club has suffered in its previous seven matches. Robinson was despatched unluckily to be dismissed.

Philip Tufnell claimed seven wickets for 49 to dismiss Lancashire for 102 in their second innings at Old Trafford yesterday and secure an unlikely 23-run win for Middlesex. Tufnell's left-arm spin produced career-best match figures of 13 for 123. Lancashire escaped having points docked after a TCCB panel inspected the pitch.

missed just after reaching his half-century. He "lost" a ball from Millns over the top of the sightscreen at the Radcliffe Road end and was leg-before to a ball he did not attempt to play. That said, he enjoyed several close calls, much to Leicestershire's growing frustration. He was almost caught in the slips off Parsons on two and was dropped by Nixon off Simmons on 29.

Millns quickly followed up with the wicket of Evans, whose top-edge was smartly

held by Maddy running back from short leg, and when Millns was rested, Simmons promptly dispatched Bates in his first over. But it was the decision of Whitaker, the Leicestershire captain, to turn to spin that put the skids under the home side.

Pierson opened up at the Pavilion end shortly before tea and in his third over after the interval removed Johnson, caught at forward short leg pushing forward. Two overs later, he had Downman taken at first slip and at 108 for four everything seemed to depend on Robinson. However, in the following over he, too, was gone. Pierson later took a third wicket when he dismissed Noon, also to a catch by Maddy close to the wicket.

Nottinghamshire had looked ready for a long fight when Archer was in partnership with Robinson but he was bowled by a terrific outswinger from Simmons, whose tally of championship wickets this season stands at an impressive 48. They came together when Millns, in his second over, had again removed the struggling Pollard.

Leicestershire had stretched their overnight advantage from 17 to 15, a size of lead that looked unlikely when Tolley removed Whitaker and Millns in the day's seventh over. But Leicestershire's resourcefulness is at the heart of their success and Parsons came up with a belligerent half-century to give them just the fillip needed.



Pollard loses his middle stump as Millns makes a breakthrough at Trent Bridge

Lee checks Derbyshire's advance towards title

By MICHAEL HENDERSON

TAUNTON (third day of four): Derbyshire, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, are 281 runs ahead of Somerset

IN THE dying days of the season, with autumn casting its shadows, Shane Lee scored a hundred spring-like in its joy. Somerset's cricket in this match has been wet, which made his innings all the more resounding. It was glorious battoning and it underlined just

what riches Australia have among their younger generation.

Lee came to Taunton as a bowler who could bat, whereas he is a batsman who bowls serviceable medium pace, if not quite as cannily as Steve Waugh, his New South Wales team-mate. Waugh, who played two summers for Somerset not so long ago, was their first choice as overseas player and turned down a substantial offer to return to Taunton as captain. Lee given an opportunity in his stead,

has taken it with both hands.

Like most Australians, he looks the part. He stands still at the crease, picks the bat up cleanly and plays his strokes in a satisfyingly orthodox manner. He hit the ball vigorously yesterday from the moment he swivelled into a fully-rounded hook and sent Malcolm out of the ground.

Lee's 110, his fourth hundred of the season, occupied only 138 balls and included 16 fours as well as that six. The quality of his cover-driving,

signalled early on with successive boundaries off Harris, was unsurpassable. Well as Barnett played later in making the 49th hundred of his career, Lee's gorgeous innings took the palm.

He made it against an attack deprived of Cork, who nursed a hamstring strain at slip and later left the field, though he may be fit to bowl today. Adams also went off, to be replaced by Les Stillman, the Derbyshire coach, as Somerset eventually conceded a lead of 60.

Lee offered a chance on 77 when he hooked Malcolm to fine leg, where Harris put the ball down. That was the only blemish on another performance of skill and character by the young seamer, who bowled well, and pretty fast. He took four for 95, decent figures on this pitch, and is a certainty for the A tour to Australia; at least, he should be.

Derbyshire wasted no time in improving their lead. Barnes took 14 from Caddick's first over and has so far added 142 with Jones. Barnett's hundred 100 came from 152 balls and he was dropped immediately at fine leg, prompting some exceptional pouting from Caddick, who wears a long face even when all is right with the world.

Jones has to do his sums this morning, and then hope that Somerset play ball. In order to win, Derbyshire must be prepared to lose, particularly as Essex, Leicestershire and Surrey look like winning. It is worth a gamble, surely.

Hollioake excels as he performs leading role

By JACK BAILEY

THE OVAL (third day of four): Northamptonshire, with four wickets in hand, need 286 runs to beat Surrey

THE Surrey captain, Alec Stewart, spent the day by his wife's hospital bed. They are expecting their second child. It is to be hoped that all goes as well as matters did for Surrey in Stewart's absence. Indeed, so handsomely did the captaincy of Adam Hollioake (who was celebrating his 25th birthday yesterday), and the efforts of the team under him, serve Surrey, that only the left-overs remain for today.

Competently as Surrey performed in setting Northamptonshire an unlikely 459 to win and then shooting out six of the visitors for 173, it was not the stoutest of opposition that they encountered. First, Northamptonshire allowed Surrey to recover from 178 for six, the last three wickets adding 120, and Hollioake failing only two runs short of a feat he accomplished in Surrey's first match of the season — two centuries in the match. Then Northamptonshire were scuppered after a reasonable start by a spell from Lewis that yielded three wickets for two ten balls.

Northamptonshire lived to

Maynard provides a performance to relish

By IVO TENNANT

SOUTHAMPTON (third day of four): Glamorgan, with four second-innings wickets in hand, are 330 runs ahead of Hampshire

WHEN Matthew Maynard bats as he did yesterday, it is best to relish him rather than ponder an unfulfilled talent. His 69 runs off 44 balls, which included five sixes and seven fours, was the pick of several decent innings. The square at Southampton remains nothing but a mystery and nothing became him like the way he put the interest of his side before his second century, continuing to go for quick runs throughout the 90s.

He was ably assisted by Lewis, Kersey, the nightwatchman, and Julian, but Hollioake's was a virtuous innings with which Northamptonshire had nothing to compare. Montgomerie was adhesive; Loye, once he found his bearings, played some cracking shots, but the youngsters, Swann and Sales both met good balls early on, Sales falling during a deadly spell by Lewis that also accounted for Loye and Curran. Bookings for lunch tomorrow are as rare as hens'

feathers, and the 100, which Gibson, whose disappointing career with Glamorgan comes to an end this month, struck several blows with as much force as timing in the final session, reaching a half-century off 35 balls. Maynard has an additional 49 runs to play with as a result of Hampshire declaring in arrears soon after lunch. He will probably not bat on his morning, leaving them 331 to win.

As to Hampshire's batting, Laney was out without addition to his overnight 102, nicely held by Morris at first slip. Smith made a half-century with eight fours and considerable ease, but the fact that he reached 1,000 runs for the season during this innings says something about his side's struggles of late. He struck eight fours in this innings.

Mari, the nightwatchman, gained his first half-century of the season. If this was not the most attractive innings of the day, it was probably the most worthy. There was time for Kendall to show why he is regarded highly in these parts, and on this flat pitch he will have every chance to excel again today. Should Maynard close Glamorgan's innings first thing this morning, his declaration will not lack generosity.

They had resumed on 21 without loss and the immediate task of scoring a further 173 to avoid an innings defeat was far from impossible against a Worcestershire side

whose slender bowling resources had been further depleted when Rawnsley, the young left-arm spinner, was caught up in the aftermath of an accident on the M5 and failed to get to the ground on time.

All the fight seemed to drain out of them, however, once Lenham and Athey leg-before, and Ellis clung to a superb catch, low to his left on the long-leg boundary, to dismiss Wells off Sherryar.

The Newell brothers were run out in successive overs, Keith by a smart piece of fielding by Moody, Mark in a mix-up with Greenfield that left him stranded by Leatherdale's throw from point. It was a rotten way for him to bag a pair on his first-class debut, especially as there was some suspicion that Rhodes had flattened the stumps without the ball in his glove.

Sheriary, bowling as well as he has done since joining Worcestershire from Leicestershire, took the next three wickets in three overs, and then, after the belligerent Law had made his 75 out of 107 in 14 overs, returned to pick up the last two and finish with championship-best figures of six for 99.

SOMERSET: First Innings 1-17, 2-79. BOWLING: Caddick 10-0-81-1; Kent 8-1, 4-21; Morris 10-0-67-2; Bowler 1-0-4-3.

SOMERSET: Second Innings 1-22, 2-22, 3-37, 4-37, 5-37, 6-37, 7-37, 8-37, 9-37. BOWLING: Sherriff 24-7-93-6; Ellis 8-4-14-0; Leatherdale 1-1-0-1-0; Lenham 1-2-2-2-2; Moody 7-2-27-0; Sherryar 1-0-2-0.

WORCESTERSHIRE: First Innings 413 for 9 wickets (D. A. Leatherdale 122, S. J. Rhodes 110, T. S. Curtis 61). Umpires: J. C. Balderton and K. E. Palmer.

Sussex hit low point in summer of strife

By PAT GIBSON

WORCESTER (third day of four): Worcester, with four second-innings wickets in hand, require 371 runs to beat Sussex

THE END of the season cannot come quickly enough as far as Sussex are concerned, judging by the way they plummeted to their fourth successive championship defeat on a blameless pitch at New Road yesterday. When they were not bat-

ting, they were running between the wickets like headless chickens. Only a painstaking 36 not out from Greenfield and a blistering assault by Law, who struck 45 off 45 balls when the game was as good as lost, prolonged the proceedings into the third afternoon after they had lost their first eight wickets for 45 in 17 overs.

Sussex have had a traumatic time lately, what with the Giddins episode, the talk of Salisbury wanting to move to another county and the injuries that have cost them the services of Jarvis and Lewry, but none of those factors could excuse such a poor batting performance.

They had resumed on 21 without loss and the immediate task of scoring a further 173 to avoid an innings defeat was far from impossible against a Worcestershire side

Somerset v Derbyshire

TAUNTON (third day of four): Derbyshire, with eight second-innings wickets in hand, are 281 runs ahead of Somerset

DERBYSHIRE: First Innings 254 (A. S. Rollins 127, K. M. Krikken 65, D. G. Cork 77, P. F. Defortes 60, G. M. Roberts 52). Second Innings 1-17, 2-79. BOWLING: Caddick 10-0-81-1; Kent 8-1, 4-21; Morris 10-0-67-2; Bowler 1-0-4-3.

SOMERSET: First Innings 1-17, 2-79. BOWLING: Sherriff 24-7-93-6; Ellis 8-4-14-0; Leatherdale 1-1-0-1-0; Lenham 1-2-2-2-2; Moody 7-2-27-0; Sherryar 1-0-2-0.

WORCESTERSHIRE: First Innings 413 for 9 wickets (D. A. Leatherdale 122, S. J. Rhodes 110, T. S. Curtis 61). Umpires: J. C. Balderton and K. E. Palmer.

Nottinghamshire v Leicestershire

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: First Innings 324 (K. P. Evans 71). Second Innings

P. F. Pollard 60, Millns 1-17, 2-79. BOWLING: Caddick 10-0-81-1; Kent 8-1, 4-21; Morris 10-0-67-2; Bowler 1-0-4-3.

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: Second Innings 1-17, 2-79. BOWLING: Caddick 10-0-81-1; Kent 8-1, 4-21; Morris 10-0-67-2; Bowler 1-0-4-3.

WORCESTERSHIRE: First Innings 283 (W. Khan 128). Second Innings

N. R. Knight 10-0-81-1; G. A. Gooch 10-0-81-1; P. A. Grayson 10-0-81-1; M. Hussain 10-0-81-1; C. M. Montague 10-0-81-1; D. A. Butcher 10-0-81-1; A. J. Kersley 10-0-81-1; G. P. Thompson 10-0-81-1; D. M. T. Cowdrey 10-0-81-1; D. M. T. Cowdrey 10

TENNIS

Muster put to flight by Agassi's aggression

FROM DAVID MILLER IN NEW YORK

ANDRE AGASSI has set the US Open Championships alight with a performance against Thomas Muster that was as masterful as his appearance was absurd. He and his manipulative clothing sponsors contrived to make him look like Harpo Marx in sneakers and stolen trousers, but no matter how ridiculous his attire, the ball coming off his racket is undiluted venom.

There is no player in the game who can rise, as Agassi does, from a state of wanton slovenliness to peak performance in a short time almost at will. This year it has sometimes seemed as if he no longer cared about his reputation, yet he produced an astonishing display to win the Olympic gold medal, against Sergi Bruguera, and has now reached the summit of his form, on his favourite cement surface, in time for the semi-finals tomorrow.

In a quarter-final of acute contrast, Muster, physically lean, taut and mean in manner, looked from the start like the destined loser in *Rocky III*. Repeatedly he was knocked to the ground, repeatedly he would climb back to his feet, the perspiration pouring in rivulets off his angular nose and chin, only to be clobbered

ever, he doubted whether Sampras or Ivanisevic, the other probable semi-finalists who were playing late last night (BST), could control Agassi in his present condition.

"You have to be very consistent," Muster said, "and that is probably not enough. He is a tremendous returner, probably the best in the world. I am usually the one that is dominating the game, and he dominates me today."

At his best, Agassi is literally flying: taking his shots with both feet off the ground, his open-grip forehand allowing him to delay the direction of his shot until the opponent is committed. Against Muster, he maintained a destructive length that drained the Austrian's energy as surely as if he were pursuing a trio of Kenyans around the running track.

A debilitating psychological aspect of Agassi's game is that he will never look at his opponent between points. Muster, with his bullying demeanour, likes to stare down his opponents, but the more he glared in Agassi's direction, the more he was left with nothing but the sight of Agassi's back, turning away after firing another sizzling

It was therefore a bit of a surprise for Agassi to arrive in the interview room and say that he wished Muster "would look me in the eye when we shake hands." Muster, having been driven at one stage, when trailing 0-2 in the third set, to demand intervention by the referee and umpire to subdue intimidating shouts mid-point by Agassi acolytes in the players' box, was probably more inclined to poke Agassi in the eye with his racket handle.

Both players declined to elaborate further on the long-running feud between them over Muster's No 1 ranking in February, or on the relevance to that dispute of the outcome of this match.

The two players had last met in the US Open at the same stage in 1994, when Muster was seeded No 13 and Agassi unseeded. Agassi had beaten him in straight sets and gone on to win the trophy, the second of his three grand-slam titles. Agassi's performance this fortnight has wholly substantiated the thinking behind the United States Tennis Association's adjustment of the seedings, compared with ranking positions, maddeningly though they handled the issue. Agassi against Sampras or Ivanisevic will make an intriguing final, though Agassi has still to dispose of Chung.

"Michael's strength starts with his speed," Agassi said. "There's not really a sport you can name in which speed isn't a strong weapon, and he has that. He also has anything up to nine game-plans that he will go to if he needs to, so he can come at you with a lot of different strategies."

Graf trial, page 14



King remains firmly in control of Star Appeal to take the lead in the dressage yesterday

King reveals star quality to leave field trailing

BY JENNY MACARTHUR

MARY KING'S run of post-Olympic success continued yesterday when she and Star Appeal went into a comfortable lead at the end of a sunlit first day of dressage at the Burghley Horse Trials, sponsored by Pedigree Chum, in Lincolnshire yesterday.

An obedient, flowing test by the 11-year-old gelding has put King four marks ahead of Pippa Funnell on her Blenheim winner, Bits And Pieces. Didier Seguret is in third place on Coeur De Rocker, a noted three-star horse but yet to impress at this level.

King has scarcely put a foot wrong since her disappointing Olympic performance in Atlanta on King William. At Thirlestane three weeks ago she won the Scottish championships on Star Appeal. Last weekend at Gatcombe, riding King William, she won her third British Open title.

"Michael's strength starts with his speed," Agassi said. "There's not really a sport you can name in which speed isn't a strong weapon, and he has that. He also has anything up to nine game-plans that he will go to if he needs to, so he can come at you with a lot of different strategies."

He returned to competition in the summer of 1994, finish-

ing fourth at Burghley. Last year he was shortlisted for the European championships after winning at Puncastown but overreached three weeks before the event. His Badminton debut this spring ended abruptly when he fell at the first fence. At Bramham, in June, King had a second crashing fall when he ran away with her on the cross country.

"He's been unlucky," King said, "but he's fit now and I've got the brakes sorted out." Where most of the riders have expressed concern at the number of difficult fences across the course for the cross country tomorrow, King is delighted. "The bigger the better for him."

Funnell and Seguret are less enthusiastic. Burghley is a big step up for the skewball Bits And Pieces, and Funnell spent yesterday afternoon walking the course with Mark Phillips, the designer, to plan her route. Seguret will be taking two of the longer, easier routes tomorrow. "Some courses are difficult and some are technical — this is both," he said.

Andrew Nicholson, on Buckley Province, the winner last year and fourth overnight

after his best dressage test to date, will be quick to take advantage of any mistakes by the leaders. Nicholson, one of the most effective of cross-country riders, intends to take the direct routes. He and his New Zealand compatriot, Mark Todd, who have second rides today.

Several top riders have some catching up to do tomorrow after disappointing tests. Karen Dixon lost valuable marks when her veteran performer, Get Smart, was disturbed by the shrill barks from the dog crèche adjacent to the arena.

The most relieved rider yesterday was Rodney Powell with his 1994 Blenheim runner-up, Cornish Relief. At Badminton, the ten-year-old gelding spent much of his dressage test on his hind legs.

The aptly-named horse had another aberration at Gatcombe last week. Yesterday he was the model of decorum, finishing well in contention in sixth place.

STANDINGS (after first day of dressage): 1. Star Appeal (M. King, GB) 43.4; 2. Bits And Pieces (P. Funnell, GB) 47.4; 3. Coeur De Rocker (D. Seguret, F) 47.6; 4. Bits And Pieces (A. Nicholson, NZL) 52.4; 5. Cornish Relief (R. Powell, GB) 56.0.

FOOTBALL: FOREIGN TRAVELLERS OFFERED JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN BY COCA-COLA CUP DRAW

Ravanelli seeks out Hereford

BY DAVID MADDOCK

FABRIZIO RAVANELLI will no doubt be getting out his bumper atlas of Great Britain this morning to check exactly where Hereford is. The Italian, along with the rest of the cosmopolitan band of overseas FA Carling Premiership newcomers, was given the perfect introduction to English football yesterday morning when the draw was made for the Coca-Cola Cup.

The second round, with its seeding bias, inevitably throws up some wonderfully eccentric pairings. Ravanelli, Juninho and Emerson will not have heard of Hereford United, of the Nationwide League third division, never mind know where they play, but he and his Middlesbrough colleagues will not forget their visit to the tiny Edgar Street ground in a hurry.

Chelsea, more glamorous now with Gullit, Viurli, Di

prospect of the Chelsea international brigade sampling sticks of Blackpool rock and dodgy meat pies is perhaps the image of the round.

The 15 Premiership clubs in the second round have all been drawn against lower-division opposition, with no fewer than 12 facing teams from the second and third divisions. Blackpool, of course, are particularly pleased with

Euro 96 helps to lift league attendances

EARLY-SEASON attendances in the FA Carling Premiership and the Nationwide League have risen — with the success of Euro 96 a factor in the surge of interest in the English game.

The Premiership reports a 4.2 per cent increase in supporters at the turnstiles after four rounds of fixtures with the influx of leading international stars into this country another draw.

The Football League, despite being unable to draw on the same kind of big-name signings, reports attendances up by 4 per cent in relation to the same period last season.

The most intriguing tie of the round sees Birmingham City visit Coventry City in the first leg. It presents the opportunity for the ambitious first division club to visit local rivals in order to measure their progress and their cap-

abilities to be able to see some of the game's finest players coming to our place. And I'm sure Vialli and the rest will treat us very seriously because they won't want to be embarrassed."

York City, who arguably produced the biggest upset in the competition's history when they defeated Manchester United at this stage last season, have the chance to prove their pedigree once more after being drawn against Everton. Alan Little's side must travel to Goodison Park for the first leg and Little said: "You can bet Everton won't make the mistake of underestimating us after our result against United."

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SAILING

Merricks battling to match Lennon

By EDWARD GORMAN
SAILING CORRESPONDENT

AFTER the first six races in the Glenfiddich Melges 24 national championships at Brixham, Mike Lennon, the defending champion on *Raw Hyde*, has established a strong position, with three firsts and two third places, to lead the 24-strong fleet.

At the head of the chasing pack is the 470 Olympic helmsman and silver medal-winner, John Merricks, on *Glenfiddich 3*, who is sailing in his first Melges regatta, with Rob Smith, on *Henri Lloyd Rapid Breathing*, in third.

The 12-race championship, which comes just a month before the Melges European championship in Barcelona, has not attracted as many entries as had been hoped for, but the racing has been close.

Yesterday, in fresh conditions, Lennon showed blistering downwind speed, recovering from a poor start in the third race of the day to finish third after being well down the pack as late as the second leeward mark. Merricks, who, like his Olympic partner, Ian Walker, is trying to find the focus for his next big campaign, already appears to be Lennon's most likely challenger, with one first, two seconds and two thirds.

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like his Olympic partner, Ian Walker, is trying to find the focus for his next big campaign, already appears to be Lennon's most likely challenger, with one first, two seconds and two thirds.

David Bedford, on *Glenfiddich 1*, retired from the first race after he broke his bowsprit in an incident on the startline with Clive Jacobs, on *Flash Harry*, and Charlie Stobart-Hook, on *Interalpha*.

Two others retired from the second race with rudder and trailer problems.

Bedford, who was second to Lennon at Cowes, has made an uncharacteristically poor start, with only one top-five finish, and is lying twelfth overall.

CYCLING

Boardman aiming at new peaks

By PETER BRYAN

CHRIS BOARDMAN, who twice set world records on his way to winning the world 4,000 metres pursuit championship in Manchester last week, will attempt to beat the world one-hour record on the same track tonight.

Boardman's aim is to improve the distance of 55.29 kilometres, covered by Tony Rominger at Bordeaux two years ago, which means he will have to circle the 250-metre wooden track 222 times to be assured of becoming the new champion in the sport's blue-riband event.

Since winning his world pursuit title, Boardman has experimented with slight changes to his stretched-out "Superman" position, devised by Graeme Obree when the International Cycling Union (ICU) outlawed his original skier's "tuck".

At a press conference yesterday, Boardman said that he had made slight changes "because riding for one hour is quite different from a 4,000 metres pursuit". He will use new handlebars, specially made to his design, to seek a greater degree of comfort. Even then, he expects to come out of the "Superman" style once or twice to ease the strain on his arm muscles.

He refused to predict the distance he might cover but said: "If all goes to plan, I will put the record at such a level that the top riders will have to think long and hard before attempting to break it."

If Boardman is successful, the record might well be the last set by a rider in "Superman" mode to be accepted by the governing body.

Hein Verbruggen, the ICU's director-general, is a known advocate of redefining the regulations so that machines have to be built to a more conventional design.

If Boardman breaks the record, it will be within the rules," he said, "but our technical commission is studying these innovations and will

Sport in brief

Essex plans for Law disrupted by rain

STUART LAW, Essex's Australian all-rounder, is highly unlikely to play in the NatWest Trophy final against Lancashire at Lord's tomorrow. Essex had planned to fly Law back from Sri Lanka today, had Australia been eliminated from the Singer Cup tournament by India in the final group match yesterday. But rain forced the postponement of the game for 24 hours. Had Australia lost, Law could have been back in London by 4pm today, giving him time for a good night's rest before the final.

Now, the earliest he can arrive in England is at 9.15am on Saturday, 75 minutes before the start at Lord's. "At present we are not contemplating Stuart being able to play," Peter Edwards, the Essex general manager, said. "But you never know what could happen if there is rain and the final is delayed, or if by 10am he's in a taxi and feeling good."

Thugwane pulls out

ATHLETICS: Josia Thugwane, the Olympic marathon champion, who claims death threats have been made against him, has pulled out of the Great North Run on September 15. The 25-year-old security guard, who became South Africa's first black gold medal-winner, said the threats from a criminal organisation: "They think I'm rich."

Britons go for record

TENNIS: Megan Miller, based in Florida, and Jo Ward, of Durham, make their debuts when Britain Under-21 women attempt a record fourth successive victory over the United States in the Maureen Connolly Trophy in Texas later this month. Also in the team are Mandy Wainwright, of Chingford, and Claire Taylor and Lizzie Jeffs, of Banbury.

Parrott flies fold

SNOOKER: John Parrott has withdrawn from the England team for the World Cup in Thailand next month. The former world champion has opted not to travel to Bangkok because the event takes place when his wife is expecting the birth of their second child. Ronnie O'Sullivan joins Peter Ebdon and Nigel Bond in the England line-up.

First-class Male

REAL TENNIS: James Maile, the world rackets champion who became a professional this week, celebrated his newfound status when he and Julian Snow, the world's top amateur, reached the final of the prestigious Cos d'Estournel European Open doubles championship with victory over Adam Phillips and Nick Wood in straight sets.

FORTHCOMING COMPANY GOLF DAYS

The companies listed have organised their golf days for the 1996 Challenge. The top four individual scores on the day will form the company team eligible for quality for a regional final.

Date	Company name	Venue	Players
8 SEP	TAMARIS PLC	MOUNT UDDER	40
7 SEP	BAROUDE PARIBAS	BRACKWELL PARK	40
9 SEP	KENNEDYS	MENTMORE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	40
9 SEP	BIG TIMBER LTD	THE MANOR HOUSE HOTEL, A CASTLE	25
8 SEP	TNT EXPRESS WORLDWIDE	MOTTETT HALL HOTEL	98
8 SEP	TULE CATTO CONSUMER CHEMICALS	BRANSTON	100
10 SEP	EUROPA - EUROPEAN EXPRESS LIMITED	STAVERTON PARK	70
10 SEP	REC PLESSEY SEMICONDUCTORS	TEWKSBURY PARK	100
10 SEP	KIA CARE (UK) LTD	THE RELFRY	32
10 SEP	MANAGEMENT SCIENCE LTD	BRICKET HALL	15
10 SEP	R J MAXWELL & SON LTD	CANTERBURY	80
10 SEP	REINN EXPRESS LIMITED	STOCKS HOTEL COUNTRY	40
10 SEP	SERVICE TEC INT'L LTD	WELCOME HOTEL	120
10 SEP	SPECTRUM SYSTEMS LTD	HELLIWOLD LAKES	100
10 SEP	UPONOR LTD	BREADSALL PRIORY	76
10 SEP	WALON LIMITED	COLLINGTHREE PARK	40
10 SEP	WINCHESTER WHITE LIMITED	SANDFORD SPRINGS	30
10 SEP	XDALE LTD	THE VALE	40
11 SEP	B&H	MONTMORE GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	90
11 SEP	BRYDEN JOHNSON & CO	NEVER	50
11 SEP	CLYDE & CO	ROYAL ST GEORGES	60
11 SEP	LLOYDS BANK PLC	KINGSWOOD	40
11 SEP	CORPORATE BANKING	DYRHAM PARK COUNTRY CLUB	40
11 SEP	SILVER LEVERE	BRAMHALL	40
11 SEP	VERNON BUILDING SOCIETY	WATERLOOVILLE	45
12 SEP	C.L		

Brighton not breezy enough for board game

CLEMENT FREUD



On Friday

The board is hard and narrow, like the mattress on a single bed in a temperance hotel; the mast is high, the sail transparent and, if the wind blows, there is no reason why a person with decent balance should not engage his feet in the straps provided, hold the mast with one hand and push out the sail in the right direction with the other. Thus will he move across the water.

After a while they teach you how to tack; not many people master that, which is why the favoured position of an average windsurfer is lying in the water next to his equipment. Competitors under the command of the British Windsurfers' Association are of a different order altogether: they skim across the water, slam and skive, perform table tops, double loops and more.

The O'Neill and Phillips PWA British Windsurfing World Cup takes place at Brighton this week, \$50,000 (about £32,000) in prize-money, half a hundred contestants from around the globe, two from nearby Shoreham — home village of our No 1 (the world's No 4), Nik Baker, whose younger brother, Ant, competes also.

I met Nik Baker yesterday for a journeyman breakfast in the Grand Hotel, on the promenade; he is 25, wears a diamond stud in his right ear, started windsurfing when he was 12, won the junior championship at 15 — a modest, agreeable man. As there were no Grapenuts on the buffet, I took some steamed figs. Baker asked what they were. They were dead, I told him. Baker ate calculus.

The successful windsurfer is over 6ft tall, weighs around 100 kilos and comes from Hawaii or the Canaries, where there is the right weather throughout the year; he has sufficient money to buy the latest sophisticated equipment. Ten years ago boards were 3.8 metres long and weighed 20 kilos. Today 2.5-metre boards weighing 3.5 kilos are commonplace: state of the art, Kevlar, carbon-fibre, honeycomb sandwich ... different boards for different winds and different



Nik Baker, the British No 1, waits for the wind to reach minimum velocity in Brighton yesterday. Photograph: Andrew Hasson

people. Baker is 5ft 9in, weighs 76 kilos and is sponsored by Fanatic (boards), AXT (sails), Oxbow (clothing), Bok (footwear) and Red Bull (energy drink). I take a sip from his bottle of Red Bull; it tastes of dissolved wine gums, dissolved red-wine gums.

"Most of our money goes on planes, hotels and cars, especially on excess baggage: up to \$3,500 on excess baggage flying to Hawaii. What we make we spend."

I ask why there are not more contests in Britain. It is the weather; Penzance is the best we have. "Good winds, big waves, nice people ..." but Hawaii and the Canaries are the Rolls-Royce locations, the world championship heats in Gran Canaria and Tenerife the most valuable and prestigious. A race consists of three stages: circumnavigation of a six-buoy circuit, downwind slalom and

riding waves — this last discipline is missing at Brighton, where the sea is flat.

On Wednesday, when the winds finally reached the minimum required nine-knot velocity, Anders Bringdal, sailing a new-design boat with a gilder-wing shaped sail, beat

On the credit side, the outcome is open.

Competitive windsurfing in Britain is a waiting game. The Mexicans have a saying: "A man can drink only so many Margueritas". Here, there is no limit to our wait for requisite winds. Kick-off was originally billed

been put down 500 metres from shore diminished and the buoys were relocated and I went to examine a sail, from adjustable head to down-haul, pausing to admire the boom cut-out, foot-tensioner, tensioner, clew, foot and luff.

And I picked up magazine and read a report on indoor windsurfing: a row of large fans placed down one side of a flooded stadium. At 3.30pm, after some 30 minutes of fevered to-ing and fro-ing, the contestants sailed their first course: all 50 of them, and Baker won. As we learnt forward to witness the slalom, the public address system told us that winds had dropped to five to seven knots: please wait for further announcements.

And I thought that if a journalist with a deadline was sent to report windsurfing, the indoor version might be just the thing.

BOWLS

Triples winner falls foul of single sting

BY DAVID RHYNS JONES

IRENE MOLYNEUX, who skipped the City and County of Oxford to the triples title in the Double Century English women's championships at Leamington Spa on Wednesday, went out of the singles in the preliminary round after being stung by a bee.

She had to go to hospital for treatment during her match with Sue Lee, of North Walsham. "They had to saw my wedding ring off my finger, and pump me with antibiotics," Molyneux said.

"But I can't blame the bee for putting me out of the championship because Sue was already a few shots in front and, even if I had won, I doubt if I would have made it to the final."

Kath Hawes, who is carrying the Oxford club's hopes in the quarter-finals today, is at 27, almost 50 years younger than Molyneux, but has the same stance and delivery, having modelled herself on her redoubtable club colleague.

In 1994, Hawes teamed up with Howard Watt and the husband and wife partnership of Gary and Jackie Harring-

ton to win the All-England mixed fours title. Now, she and Harrington are in line to meet in the semi-finals.

First, however, Harrington will have to beat the 1993 champion, Dorothy Prior, of Hewell, and Hawes has to overcome Maureen Eccles, of Seascall, who scored a memorable 21-20 victory over Norma May, the 1987 champion, yesterday.

Mary Price, the 1988 singles champion, is still going strong in singles and fours. Her 21-18 second-round win over Gill Fitzgerald in the singles avenged her defeat by the Kettering Lodge player in the Champion of Champions singles event last week.

Also catching the eye in the fours is the 17-year-old Lincolnshire skip, Amy Gowshall, who has already played in three junior international series.

She faced a stern test from a Carlton Conway quartet, skipped by Brenda Atherton, next year's England president, and came through with flying colours, winning 20-15.

Results, page 38

BOXING: CHAMPION HEEDS LESSONS OF THE PAST IN EFFORT TO TAME TYSON

Seldon plans service with a smile

FROM SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT, IN LAS VEGAS

IT IS hard to believe that Bruce Seldon, who has been knocked out in one round by Riddick Bowe, will be able to do much better against Mike Tyson when they meet at the MGM Grand Garden here tomorrow. The World Boxing Association (WBA) champion believes, however, that he can emulate James "Buster" Douglas and become the second man to beat Tyson.

Seldon has studied film of Douglas's bout with Tyson and intends to follow the Douglas plan of "stay calm and stick to your game."

It might sound like the kind of advice that Captain Mainwaring gave to his men, but Seldon fully intends to stick to it. "When Tyson gets in there, I'm going to be smiling," he said. "You are going to see the biggest smile on my face."

Seldon is hoping to find the strength to carry out his strategy from the memory of his mother, Joan, who died

three years ago at the age of 54. "I have never forgotten her," Seldon said.

"I speak to her every day, in the morning and at night, and she gives me strength. Her memory and that of my trainer, Carmen Graziano, who died four years ago, will sustain me. They are with me in spirit. They'd be proud of me now," Douglas, remembered man to beat Tyson.

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straight back to Atlantic City and spent two hours by his mother's graveside. "I would have loved her to have been there," he said. "There will always be pain, but I think it has made me stronger."

Many experts believe that he will need more than just his mother's memory to look Tyson in the face and keep his nerve. Seldon's manager, Rocco DePersia, an Atlantic City attorney, disagrees. "He went into the New Jersey penal system at the age of 16, a boy among animals. He came out a man. Tyson is not going to intimidate him on a personal basis."

After the defeat by Bowe in 1991, Seldon almost gave up boxing but his promise to his mother kept him going. Of the disparaging odds for Saturday — Tyson 12-1 on to win on a knockout, Seldon 25-1 to win — DePersia said: "Don't talk to me about odds. When he was 15, you couldn't get odds he would be alive today."

Seldon's mother saw her son make amends by setting out on his boxing career. He built a creditable record of 31 wins out of 32 contests before she died. When he won the WBA title last year, by stopping Tony Tucker, he went

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Peter Graf battles to keep Steffi out of court



Peter Graf in court as the trial started yesterday. "Our daughter in no way knew about our financial and tax affairs, she left it to me. I had the authority to sign"

Defence team in tax-fraud case blames chaotic German system

FROM ROGER BOYES IN MANNHEIM

THE first game seemed to go Steffi Graf's way yesterday as lawyers and her father, looking sallow after 13 months in jail, fought hard to keep her out of Germany's most controversial tax evasion case.

Instead of dragging the world's number one woman tennis player into the trial of her father, defence lawyers in effect put the whole German tax system in the dock. There were hints, too, that the trial, expected to last until January, would expose how celebrities are given political protection.

Peter Graf, a 58-year-old used car dealer, is accused of hiding his daughter's earnings by setting up a web of offshore companies. He and his financial adviser, Joachim Eckardt, could receive sentences of up to ten years in jail if found guilty. Miss Graf has already made DM20 million (£13.5 million) available to the taxman, pending the outcome of the trial.

"Our daughter in no way knew about our financial and tax affairs, she left it to me," Herr Graf said in an emotionally charged voice. It was his first public appearance since watching her win Wimbledon in 1995. "I had the authority to sign contracts, open accounts, make transfers," he said.

This version is disputed by Horst Schmitz, one of the prosecution's key witnesses. The former petrol-station manager was part of the Graf court and

remembers a family meeting — attended by Miss Graf — at which the structure of the tax-evasion companies was set out. Miss Graf denies being there.

Her absence from the trial is one of its mysteries, since it is her income that was diverted. In a recent interview, she said: "I was happy to concentrate on playing tennis and leave the financial matters to others. I can see now that was not perhaps quite right." Yet neither the prosecution nor Herr Graf's defence team has subpoenaed her. Herr Eckardt's lawyers hinted they might call her as a witness, but that was understood to be a threat to the Graf team not to shift all the blame onto Herr Eckardt.

At the heart of the trial is the complex relationship between Miss Graf and her father, who trained and, in many ways, developed her skills. His control over her was total: reports say he used to kick her if she played a poor shot. Herr Graf became addicted to tablets and drank heavily, but wife Heidi, Steffi and her brother learnt to live with his moods.

Part of Herr Graf's personal defense yesterday was that he lost control of himself. Her string of successes from 1989 propelled the family into the financial big-time, and the cream of German and international industry paid court to her. With sponsorship money flowing in and celebrity parties

to attend, Herr Graf, as he admitted yesterday, lost control. But Professor Franz Salditt, his defence lawyer, explained that the flaws were as much to do with the system as they were personal. Why, for example, did it take the German inland revenue so long to pursue the Graf? Herr Graf's explanation is simple: "We were promised that tax exile would not be necessary," he said yesterday.

Plainly, after German unification — when taxes began to rise steeply — politicians were nervous that Germany's superstars would move, like the three-time Wimbledon champion Boris Becker to Monaco. Miss Graf wanted to stay in Germany and Bonn was happy to have a German heroine remain at home.

"I gained the impression that there were many possibilities to lessen our tax burden, and most high earners were doing precisely that. I felt stupid for not undertaking something similar," Miss Graf said.

Professor Salditt said the case demonstrated the chaotic state of German tax law. The prosecutor shot back: "Don't present this case as the Government Moloch pitted against the little man ... it's not like that."

The ball was knocked over the net a few more times, but day one of the trial concluded with advantage to Miss Graf.

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Steffi Graf: "I was happy to concentrate on playing tennis and leave the financial matters to others"

Post-communist women challenge office sex pests

By ROGER BOYES

SEXUAL harassment of female employees has become a burning issue in Central Europe for the first time since the fall of communism.

The sacking of Frantisek Batria, a 57-year-old bank manager who was accused of

making suggestive comments to women staff, has shocked Prague. Under the former regime some degree of sexual banter and supposedly playful physical contact was regarded as a normal part of office life; the footage of Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, tickling his secretary before an official

meeting showed that in the Kremlin at least not much has changed. But as capitalism makes inroads into the post-communist world, so do Anglo-American guidelines on office relationships.

The case of Mr Batria shows how quickly attitudes are shifting. When Mr Batria's

female deputy complained in July that he had frequently fondled her and questioned her about her sex life, the bank stood solidly behind the male manager. Two other women had supported her claim. The woman was later sacked.

The bank later performed a U-turn after Mr Batria's secre-

tary complained that he had been sexually harassing her. Worried that its image was suffering, it sacked Mr Batria. Although women's rights campaigners in the Czech Republic claimed an important victory, the bank said it would not reinstate the dismissed woman.

Nato 'shoot to kill' threat after Serbs block patrol

FROM REUTER IN SARAJEVO

NATO warned Bosnian Serb leaders yesterday after a British army patrol was forced to fire into the air to disperse a hostile crowd in Serb territory.

"Yesterday the soldiers chose to fire a warning shot. The next time the consequences could be fatal," Admiral Joseph Lopez, American commander of the Nato-led peace force (Ifor) in Bosnia, said. "Our troops will do what is necessary and prudent if they are required to protect the lives of other Ifor troops," his statement said.

A British patrol was escorting two Serb police armoured vehicles in the northwest town of Banja Luka on Wednesday when it discovered unauthorised vehicles and weapons in the convoy, including an anti-aircraft gun, a multiple-barrelled rocket launcher and a 12.7 mm machinegun, NATO spokesman said.

While the ten-member patrol moved to confiscate the

Serb Interior Ministry units as extremely hostile. The Ifor commander also warned Biljana Plavsic, the Bosnian Serb Acting President, of the seriousness of the incident and "insisted that she take responsibility for her police and the actions of her people".

Admiral Lopez was stern. He told Bosnian Serb leaders: "Our soldiers are trained and are authorised to shoot to kill in order to defend themselves and others. It is not our intent to harm anyone, but when threatened we will respond."

The British patrol drove on with the confiscated weapons, but when it stopped to regroup it was surrounded again by a crowd and Serb police cars. To defuse tensions, the confiscated weapons were taken to a Bosnian Serb army barracks in the area temporarily.

Major Boudreau said that the British eventually moved the weapons to the local Ifor base on the outskirts of Banja Luka.

Major Boudreau said that the Bosnian Serb Army and a local police chief co-operated with Nato but singled out the

confrontation in Banja Luka coincides with rising tensions across Bosnia before post-war elections are held on September 14.

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FIVE CARS TO

Why Tony chose the wrong pub.

An aspiring Prime Minister should be seen enjoying a drink on Albert Square not in Coronation Street says Candida Crewe, who prefers EastEnders

Something badly rankled when Tony Blair popped in for a pint at the Rovers Return last week. In fact, I took so much umbrage that I nearly lost my vote. That single misjudgment shook my loyalties almost as much as some of his flimsier policies. He chose the wrong pub.

If he knew anything about luring — and indeed, keeping — the younger voter, it would have been the Queen Vic that he patronised. While the OAP vote may be with Coronation Street, the all-important youth vote is firmly in the EastEnders camp. I may not be subscriber-to-Vor hip, but I'm (relatively) youthful and I'm a dedicated fan of all that goes on in Albert Square. In my book, Blair committed a terrible faux pas when he dropped into the Rovers Return. Coronation Street is old hat; EastEnders is where it's at.

The world divides into those deranged, sad people who watch Neighbours; those older, staid, cosier folk who favour "the Street"; a few who go in for the more implausible dead-bodies-buried-in-the-garden storylines characteristic of Brookside; and the altogether more enlightened millions who tune into EastEnders.

Myself, I might well have been among that completely different band — those who are too snooty by half to think of ever watching any soap, let alone getting hooked on one. I will admit that it was the category I used to slot into. Television was for current affairs, documentaries and the occasional well-chosen drama. Soaps were down there with that Saturday evening neverland of game shows and pet programmes presented by earnestly smiling, bearded people.

But while I always presumed that watching Coronation Street was the television equivalent of drinking Horlicks, I deigned to give EastEnders a go when it was launched with such a flourish more than 11 years ago. I stuck with it in a noncommittal sort of way but drifted when key characters such as Angie and Den left the series.



Tiffany and Sam continue the Queen Vic tradition

solitary night in a couple of years ago, I channel-hopped from some worthy documentary and happened upon my old acquaintance, EastEnders.

The characters had changed somewhat, and trusty, bushy Sharon was in the process of slowly but surely and skillfully being written out, but the plots weren't hard to catch up on. The programme was company, and rather reliable and chirpy company at that. It was a bad day when Michelle, who I liked, left for America for ever (or, rather, Susan Tully decided it was time to move on and, like Anita Dobson before her, do some theatre), I'm still smarting, but Bianca and Tiffany are merry substitutes.

Some detractors accuse the programme of being depressing. There are gloomy incidents, of course, because the writers and producers try their best to emulate real life.

A few years later I found myself with a fellow whose work occasionally took him away for weeks at a time. Unfortunately his trips were to those spots of which there are very few left in the world, completely wanting in telecommunications networks, namely the outer reaches of the Russian Federation and the Caucasus. I became lonely. On a

secret vice. Friends were still in the snoots camp — or so I thought — and, although I carried on watching, I kept my mouth shut about it.

By the time the globetrotter had come home, I was addicted. Unfortunately, it was a bit like being a slave to Valium or ladies' underwear: I was ashamed. It remained

a secret vice. Friends were still in the snoots camp — or so I thought — and, although I carried on watching, I kept my mouth shut about it.

Soon afterwards I discovered that a clever novelist friend, who is grumpy and cool, comes from Bermondsey and lives in Notting Hill, was moonlighting as a scriptwriter for EastEnders. I was wide-eyed with wonder. What an enviable job! I fired questions at him and, for the first time, I felt I could come out and tell someone how brilliant I thought it was. Then I dropped in on another friend, who also lives in a fashionable part of London and has a manner that suggests she's above such things as soap operas. I caught her in the middle of watching some riveting intrigue on that night's episode (which I'd carefully set to tape before I gone out). She came clean.

Then other improbable viewers began to squirm out of the woodwork. Rumour had it that the Princess of Wales, Anthony Hopkins and Ian McKellen were fans. More recently, a trendy young film director said that any EE script beat the hell out of the one for Bertolucci's new film *Stealing Beauty*, and a few days ago playwright Jonathon (*The Beautiful Thing*) Harvey rang the production office to congratulate it on last week's Blackpool episodes.

Why is EastEnders so good? Many of its fans have never watched an episode of Coronation Street in their lives. For me, the air it had about it was always too cosy and old-fashioned, somehow, to win me over. That view may be doing the longest-running soap a terrible injustice. For all I know it may now be full of groovy and sexy characters going about all manner

I'd gone out. She came clean.

of groovy and sexy pursuits. But the prejudices of the twenty and thirtysomethings perhaps arises from those strange black-and-white clips, which occasionally appear on telly, of episodes past; and that image of a foot-faced Ena Sharples in her curlers which, though she left the Street long ago, is curiously persistent.

I have the impression, rightly or

wrongly, that EastEnders is altogether more accessible, up-to-date, and on-the-ball. So they say, is Brookside. But Brookside does tend to go in for storylines that are just too fanciful, especially if the reason you watch a soap is, as I do, to revel in the ordinary. Aliens and anything supernatural are a strict no-no area. Didn't I read some-



Tony Blair should have chosen his pub more carefully: which soap opera street you drink on can have a profound effect at the polls

of groovy and sexy pursuits. But the prejudices of the twenty and thirtysomethings perhaps arises from those strange black-and-white clips, which occasionally appear on telly, of episodes past; and that image of a foot-faced Ena Sharples in her curlers which, though she left the Street long ago, is curiously persistent.

Lucky, EastEnders is more earthy, with the sense steadily to stick to the mundane factors of real life, which is what it is there for and what it does best. Marital strife, bawdy adolescents, infidelity, drug-dealing, unwanted pregnancies, bereavement, Aids, job inscriptions, homosexuality (even if last week the powers that be at the BBC, in an extraordinarily misguided

and patronising move, lopped seconds off a gay kiss), you name it, it's all there.

But, perhaps more important than any of this, they manage to make the characters appealing. Unlike those in Friends (my other current obsession), they aren't all gratuitously likeable, sexy and attractive.

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someone who is so pompous and so boring that he is fascinating. He is depicted in such a way that the viewer can't help but be on his side, willing him to discover the truth about his errant wife. Similarly, Ricky is so stupid that one can only marvel, but he is all the same endearing enough to make one bemoan his — with any luck only temporary — absence from the series.

I suppose this is all part of some special, secret EastEnders formula, which is hard to define but which is what makes it so irresistible, even to some viewers who spurn its rivals and yet more, myself included, who might otherwise be snooty and among the first to dismiss it all as lowbrow.

Jason Cowley and Dalya Alberge find the literati chasing their tails

Power of the poison pen



Sexton: Caustic

rewrote parts of the book, has told friends that there are similarities between Sexton and Pinfest. Both went to grammar school and Cambridge; both are passionate Nabokovians and have had difficult relationships with women, and notoriously caustic critics. Yet Craig scorns the idea that she has a grudge against Sexton, describing him to friends as "pompous and disarmingly vain".

What is most amusing — and best — about the feud is what is most unexpected. For who would have thought that Sexton, whose reviews are among the most ironic and heartless in London, should have suffered such a calamitous failure in humour as soon as the tables were turned on him?

Craig, who has agreed to

rare, but just occasionally characters and events seem a bit too close for comfort. Earlier this year Penguin published *New Boy*, William Sutcliffe's story of homosexuality in a boys' public school. It became the focus of attention when teachers and pupils at Haberdashers' Aske's School for Boys in Hertfordshire felt that Sutcliffe — one of their old boys — was describing their institution. The publishers agreed to rename one dubious character in any reprint.

Paul Watkins offended one of his fellow Old Etonians by using his name for an unsavoury character in his memoirs of his schooldays, *Stand Before Your God*. The case was settled when his publisher paid out costs and made a public apology.

While Craig does not expect Sexton to resort to litigation, it is unlikely that *A Vicious Circle* will be published this year. "The matter is now in the hands of our lawyers," says Louisa Synington, publicity director of Hamish Hamilton. "The novel was due to have been published in December but won't appear now." But Craig may yet emerge triumphant, for she adds: "We don't publish much in December anyway, so that doesn't mean much."

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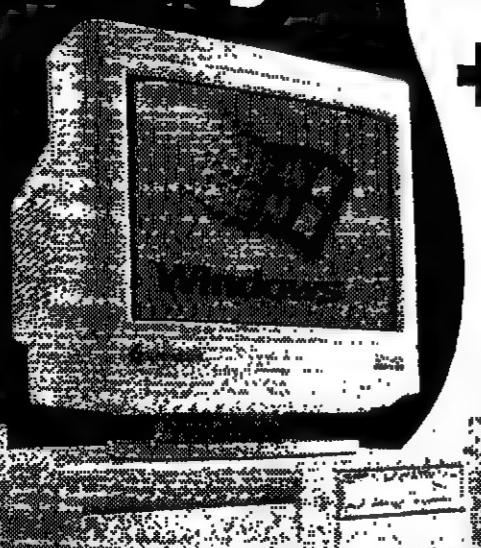
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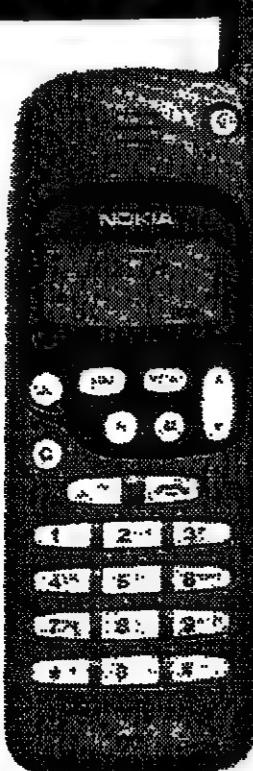
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Is Blair betraying the Celts?

Labour's devolution plans are a mess, says Magnus Linklater

Just as Tony Blair's strategy seemed to be well on course, with scarcely a wobble in the opinion polls, trouble is threatening from the most unexpected quarter. A warning light has come on in the election cockpit, and despite some routine adjustment, it continues to flash alarmingly. It has nothing, this time, to do with tax policy or public spending. Instead it is about something that must cause Mr Blair enormous concern — the alienation of his supporters in two parts of the United Kingdom which his spin-doctors must have marked down as rock solid. First in Scotland, now in Wales, there are serious signs of revolt.

The row over Labour's plans, announced last weekend, for a double referendum on the creation of a Scottish parliament has been hugely embarrassing. It has exposed an inept Opposition performance, and a leadership increasingly out of touch with popular opinion. It suggests that Labour is doing what should by most political rules be impossible: losing ground to a deeply unpopular Government on an argument which has hitherto enjoyed massive support. In Wales, disaffection has reached such a pitch that one MP has announced he will actually campaign against a Welsh assembly, one of the party's central commitments.

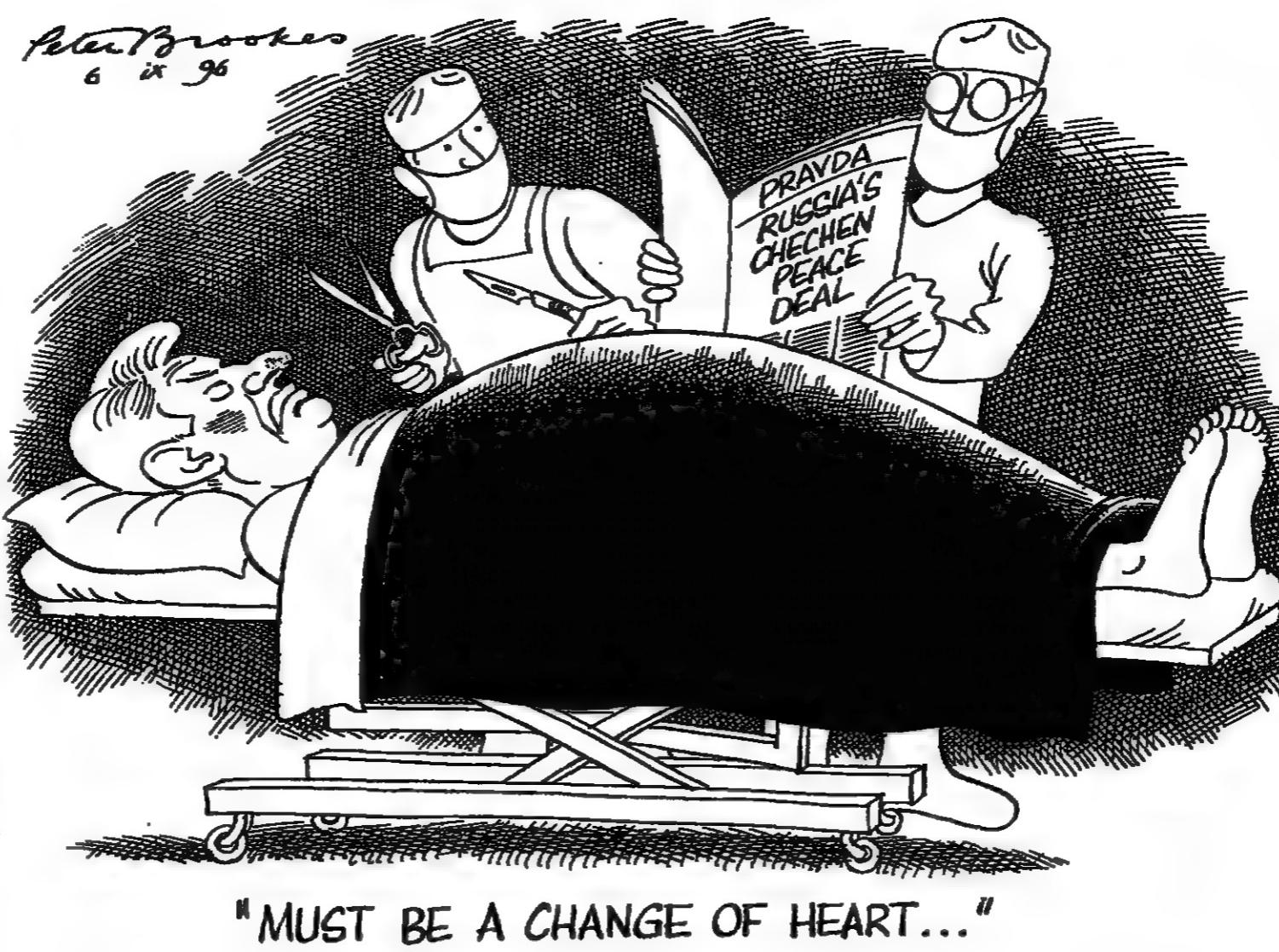
Some measure of achievement can be judged from an opinion poll in Scotland on Monday, which showed Labour's lead down by nine points, all the ground being ceded to the great enemy, the Scottish National Party. Just as important has been the reaction of the media — newspapers and television alike — which have traditionally been sympathetic to Labour's cause. Words like "fancé", "débâcle", "ridicule", "collapse", "silly" and "incompetent" have been the stuff of headlines. The *Scotsman* called it "a piteous spectacle"; the *Herald* concluded that the party was gambling with the political future of the country, and that if it lost, "Labour will not be forgiven". It is a long time since we have seen language as strong as this in the Scottish press, and for a party which prides itself on its deft handling of the media, it has been a remarkable setback.

At least as interesting is the way these rows on the Celtic fringe have been perceived from London. With barely an exception, they have been ignored. In the case of Wales, where the issue is the imposition of proportional representation for a Welsh assembly against the wishes of Labour's old guard, the rebellion of a left-wing MP, Llew Smith, supported by Allan Rogers and Denzil Davies, is seen as a minor infraction. In Scotland, the complex device of a double referendum to head off a threatened revolution in the party has actually been described by Mr Blair as a "mature" decision, a neat solution to a tricky problem. The Shadow Secretary, George Robertson, has been congratulated for his

There are signs of revolt in Scotland and Wales

dorsed by the party leaders as principled and practical. Mr Robertson predicted an overwhelming victory when they were presented to the party's executive, and even suggested that it was, for him, as crucial a decision as John Smith's "one man, one vote". The script, however, failed, as so often on these occasions, to turn out the right way. As the vote approached last weekend, defeat began to seem a real possibility. Opponents of the two-question referendum refused to back down. A frantic last-minute compromise produced what frantic last-minute compromises so often do, a muddle. There will, it seems, be not one but two referendums. The first will ask the two questions about the principle and about tax; but just in case voters still have doubts, they will be given a second chance to take a view. As a parliament is actually set up, they will be asked again if they really mean it to have tax-raising powers. Already it's being called the "are you sure?" vote. It is as insulting as it is unnecessary.

The net effect of these two rows is to undermine the confidence of Labour supporters just when it should be unavailable. A party whose main campaigning theme in Wales and Scotland has been the proposition that only Labour can deliver self-government has introduced the dangerous virus of doubt. And for a leadership that has placed unity and discipline at the centre of its strategy, it suggests that these qualities are in short supply. Time, perhaps, for the pilot to attend to the controls.



Hiding from humanity

When recluses become hermits, should we save them from themselves?

There's now so queer as folk. But when the queerness turns into something truly terrible, we wonder yet again that human beings can do things that we believed could not be done.

Imagine it is 1960, just 30 years ago. The war in Vietnam was raging, the Berlin Wall had not long been put up, drugs were just about to start their rampant progress. Albert Speer had got out of prison, the Moors murders were in everyone's mind, Lowry had had his first big exhibition, Harold Wilson was Prime Minister, Lurcat's tapestries were seen in Britain the first time, we had won the World Cup and everyone was in love with Twiggy.

And then there was Desmond Lockwood. And then there was Karen Morgan. I shall begin with Desmond Lockwood.

The boy was a very ordinary boy: the only picture of him shows a charming smile. No one would or could have guessed what might follow.

Desmond Lockwood was a young building worker; he was 19. His pleasant attitude and demeanour suggests that he worked well. But he lost his job. It is unlikely that he lost it because of bad work or behaviour; in those days employers sacked and took on workers very casually.

So it was not a very remarkable thing to happen. But in Desmond Lockwood it caused a kind of rage, and he took the rejection as a personal slight from society. "Damn it," he said to his older brother: "if that is the way they treat people, I'm not working any more." Nor did he, ever.

Now we turn to Karen Morgan. She was a bright young woman, winning a place at Bexley Grammar School. But there was darkness in her and she, like Desmond Lockwood, had decided that the darkness was where she wanted to be. So she, like Desmond Lockwood, rolled down the blinds. She was 16 years old when she went into her last stopping place, and she lived in the darkness for 13 years, and died in it.

The word that obviously comes to the surface, is of course "mad". It is too much easily spoken. Take first, Desmond Lockwood, when he decided to lock himself away. Did he think that he would remain self-immured for the rest of his life? Or was he just trying it on — making fools of the family? Remember his last words before he went into the cave: "Damn

Bernard Levin

it, if that is the way they treat people. I'm not working." How many hundreds of annoyed family members have thrown the milk-jug across the room and shouted "I'm never coming back"? And how many didn't come back? One in a hundred? One in a thousand?

Well, we know one now. Desmond Lockwood said he was not coming back, nor did he. So what did he do in the darkness, for thirty years? Well, he had television, but in those days — remember we are in 1966 — the fare would have been pretty thin and repetitive. Pause, reader, at that thought. We can collect bits and pieces from the hermit and his relatives; after all, he had to eat. It is said that he ate nothing but ice-cream and drank nothing but tea: surely he would have died from such a regimen? But it seems otherwise: the bonny lad who started this turned into a 15-stoner, but didn't die until he was 49. Mind you, his hair grew so long that it reached his waist, and he eventually sported a 2ft beard.

It did they not notice? The answer is a terrible one, but also one that can be understood. The girl came from a working-class background; when their daughter became unhinged they did not immediately get in touch with the appropriate organisations, indeed they got in touch with nobody. Why? I said it was a working-class area; when their daughter became mentally ill, their immediate response was, in effect

"What will the neighbours say?" — and for 16 years Karen Morgan's parents hid the terrible truth, because "they were too ashamed to talk about it to anyone".

Oh, great. Heaven, when will such shame die out? The girl might — almost certainly could — have been saved. Saved, that is, from this:

She had been hounded from the world, suffering her own extreme personal torment in a bare first-floor bedroom. She slept on the floorboards with a bucket for a lavatory and her food was left on a tray outside the door.

Her brother mirrored her: he was also psychiatrically ill: he too did not venture out into the world for ten years, and when Karen Morgan died, he tried to kill himself.

There's now so queer as folk. Karen Morgan suffered as far as suffering can go, and was overlooked. Would you swear that Mr X, whom I see frequently in my neighbourhood, is not burning in dreadful torment? Ridiculous! Is it? How do you know? And if you are certain that there are no chalk-marks on the blackboard, well, what about those people whom I pass without a glance? How do we — you and I — know that perfect outsiders can be hellish misfits?

Where does the line run? And how far? A cheerful boy loses his job (but at a time when jobs are easily found) and walks into the darkness and stays there for the rest of his life. Nor does he chafe at the darkness; indeed, he lives with the darkness, and it is his lifetime, for what would he have been without television?

Where does the line run? And how

Y et there is no evidence that he yearned for the outside world; indeed when anyone came near him, he vanished immediately. Mad or sane, he lived as he wanted to live, and who should rebuke him?

The story of Karen Morgan is somewhat parallel, but in this case there is tragedy, very dark tragedy. Desmond Lockwood liked his strange home, but the girl's home was a hell. Not a hell thrust upon her, but one that she had taken to her bosom for herself. For 16 years she lived — if it could be called living — in her bedroom, and never came out, until the pitiful child came out dead.

There is no point in going over the details of the people who lived cheek by jowl with her and apparently did not notice the dreadful dying of Karen Morgan: suffice it to say that they must have been blind, deaf and stupid, until they noticed that she was dead.

But what about her relatives? Why

up the pitch in their hunt for worms," says a Rugby Football Union man. "But we have caught them humanely and released them into woodland areas."

Another threat to the pitch — a rash of field mushrooms — has been simpler to solve. The groundsmen pick them and fry them up for tea.

● *Ivana Trump, the fabulously wealthy bee-hive, is a lady who takes her wardrobe seriously. Even in her present predicament, suffering from a sprained ankle, details have to be just so. Too vain to use crutches, she has taken to hopping about New York in a strange, loping manner dragging her leg in plaster behind her. Not any old plaster, mind you. She refused to contemplate a regulation white cast and opted instead for designer blue — with sequins.*



O. Desdemona

been shaping up for ever since she took the star turn as Mary in a nativity play opposite a Joseph she simply couldn't stand.

Rachel has been taking tips from her Mum. "She gave me the script of *Othello* for my birthday, with lots of Post-it notes offering suggestions about posture and things," she says. "I do take her advice — when I agree."

P.H.S

In the swim

PROJECT NORMA, the Government's bold attempt to field the Prime Minister's wife as a secret weapon for the election campaign, is to annex the airwaves. To win the hearts of the nation, Norma Major has taken Radio 4 on a tour of Chequers, during which she confesses to a personal failing. She has only just learnt to swim — using water wings.

In *Inside Chequers*, to be broadcast this month, Norma suggests that she can now swim like a dolphin after lessons in the swimming pool at Chequers. "I have learnt to swim since I have been here."

Linda Lally, head of the staff of Wrens at Chequers, elaborates: "I couldn't claim credit for teaching her to swim, because she taught herself," she says. "But I was there with her, because we do have a rule that you have to be with someone in the pool."

"She started initially with floats and one of those boards and then got into the water wings. She let a little bit of air out each day then eventually she cracked it. It was really nice. She enjoys going for her early morning swims."

No mention is made in the programme of the Prime Minis-

ter's own aquatic exploits, but the broadsheet does reveal that Margaret Thatcher had a predilection for a special custard produced by the head chef at Chequers.

There is also talk of Boris Yeltsin's sleeping problems when he visited. The bed he slumbered in at Chequers, previously used by Stalin's right-hand man Molotov, was too small for his corpulent frame. It had to be rebuilt to hold the Russian leader.

Cartoon by Clegg. Text by Clive. Who woke me up?

Chauvinism

AN EXTRAORDINARY rumour concerning the very serious actor Ben Kingsley is doing the rounds backstage. Kingsley has just started filming a movie called *Photographing Fairies* at Ealing Studios, where he has been given the role of a driver.

The story goes that the driver can't get Kingsley's name right. He keeps calling him Bill, not Ben.

And Kingsley, being a very un-Bill sort of person, has taken such offence that he has asked for a new driver. Vigorous denials of the tale from the production company have yet to kill this ridiculous rumour-mongering.

On the nose

GRIPPING news for readers of the new *Punch*, which was relaunched at a very sweaty party full of journalists at Harrods on Wednesday. The magazine's proprietor, Mohan

DIARY

med Al Fayed, may yet contribute editorially. "Yes, I may write something when I have it up my sleeve," he threatened.

Al Fayed was in good heart, despite an act from Rory Bremner casting on a matter close to the Egyptian's heart: his rejected applications for British citizenship.

"Some are born great," said Bremner, "some achieve greatness, and some are still waiting for a letter from the Passport Office."

Pitch in

NEWS that the five nations' championship will now take place this season will cheer the groundsmen at Twickenham, who have had their work cut out of late after an invasion of foxes.

"We have had a bit of a problem with them getting in and digging

up the pitch in their hunt for worms," says a Rugby Football Union man. "But we have caught them humanely and released them into woodland areas."

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Hanky ready

DRAMATIC NEWS. Dame Diana Rigg's daughter Rachel Stirling, a 19-year-old student of Russian and the history of art at Edinburgh University, is taking to the stage this month in her first leading role.

She will play Desdemona in the National Youth Theatre's production of *Othello* at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London — a role she has

Give talk a chance in Ulster

Patrick Mayhew
says a consensus
is still possible

Events in Northern Ireland over the summer have shown that old prejudices can still erupt all too readily. In the past fortnight alone we have seen how destructive internal feuds can be — whether by way of death threats, murders or punishment beatings.

Yet the chief desire of most people in Northern Ireland is for a true peace and political stability. If this can be achieved, so many other objectives become more easily attainable. Primacy in the search for peace and political stability must be given to democratic politics. A settlement acceptable to the majority on both sides of the community has to come first.

That is a challenge I have always welcomed. Under the Prime Minister's determined leadership we have accepted political risks. Reverses have occurred. Yet we have been right to keep trying, and the net advance remains considerable. It is remarkable how widely this view is expressed. From a few reports one would think that everyone is saying we might as well give up. But they are not. Most want us to keep going.

Ultimately, any new political accommodation must be reached by consent. No such accommodation can be imposed from outside. The best means of expression can be found in local political structures, in which local politicians can share real responsibility.

This is why our efforts have been concentrated on producing a mechanism to enable local representatives to come together. All the issues that stability has to offer are reducing the instability in Northern Ireland should be on the agenda.

It is very clear that these issues extend beyond the borders of Northern Ireland. Nationalists in the North wish to have their Irish identity acknowledged and recognised in any new arrangements. Unionists wish no less to have their British identity recognised. They see the Anglo-Irish agreement as a destabilising factor. It is no less clear that most people in Northern Ireland wish to remain part of the United Kingdom, and I want to make it clear that it is a fact which we warmly welcome.

These are the present realities. The broader the scope of the talks, the better the chances of reaching a successful conclusion. The negotiations should surely be as inclusive as is practicable within the basic democratic principle that participants should use only the force of argument, and not the force of arms.

Despite its political mandate, however, Sinn Fein cannot participate in the negotiations in the absence of an IRA ceasefire. Equally, if Sinn Fein does not, after entry into the political process, demonstrate a total and absolute commitment to the principles of democracy and non-violence set out in the report of the international body, its continued involvement cannot be accepted.

It would be a serious disappointment if Sinn Fein, or for that matter the loyalist parties, were to fail to fulfil the conditions for participation, but it would not mean that the talks would lose their validity.

If a political accommodation did not lead directly to an end to violence, it might still greatly reduce the alienation, exclusion, fear and uncertainty on which the men of violence feed. It would give honourable and fair-minded people a greater common interest in standing up to extremists on either side. Firm, effective and even-handed policing can make more progress towards the total elimination of terrorism.

As to any limitation on the agenda — there should be none. Each participating party must have the right to set out and hold firm to points of principle, and to protect its key interests. All of this is reflected in the rules of procedure which the participants have now adopted. This is a crucially important advance. It has taken time, but it has been worthwhile.

Those taking part in the talks have settled upon a definition of agreement which is at once fair, imaginative and effective. They will make every effort to reach agreement by unanimity. But if that proves impossible they have agreed on a minimum standard of "sufficient consensus".

The key feature of "sufficient consensus" is that it makes it impossible to secure any outcome from the talks which is unacceptable to a majority in either of the two main political traditions in Northern Ireland. Additionally, any outcome will be put to the people of Northern Ireland in a referendum. Hence "sufficient consensus" is both a safeguard and a challenge.

The talks process is the realistic way forward from a system of direct rule that denies local responsibility, and has obviously harmful consequences for the politics in the Province. That is why the mood in Northern Ireland, and far more widely, is inclined to "give talk a chance". When the multi-party talks resume next Monday, we shall be doing just that.

Sir Patrick Mayhew is Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.

OBITUARIES

Clem Thomas, rugby player, journalist and businessman, died of a heart attack on September 5 aged 67. He was born on January 28, 1929.

There was no larger than life character in rugby than R.C.C. "Clem" Thomas. He was the scourge of opposing back lines as a rampaging hawk now forward, and when his career finally ended in 1959, he picked up the pen to write with similar conviction on the sport he loved.

He enjoyed nothing more than a good challenge and away from the field of play he twice stood as a Liberal candidate in his native West Wales. Although he failed to get elected, he went on to stand as an MEP. He was a fierce critic of rugby's governing bodies, and his forthright views were broadcast across the world. Moreover, they were listened to and respected by all.

He died of a heart attack at his Swansea home just two hours after completing a radio interview about the current strife afflicting Welsh rugby. Ironically, his death occurred only hours before it was announced that the five nations' championship he had adorned as a player in the 1950s had been saved from the sporting scrapheap.

Born in Cardiff, Richard Clement Charles Thomas was sent to Blundell's School in Tiverton, Devon. His debut for Wales came at Cardiff Arms Park in 1946, when the Welsh Secondary Schools Under-19 team defeated the English Public Schools 11-9.

At the time he was described as "a hardworking, fast and intelligent wing-forward". He never lost those qualities in his senior career, yet added a steely, uncompromising edge to his play.

He won three more schoolboy caps in 1946 and 1947, never ending on the losing side, before going up to Cam-

bridge. He won a Blue in the 1949 defeat by Oxford, yet a year earlier he had helped the students to take Cardiff's 18-month ground record with a magnificent triumph at the Arms Park.

By the time he won his Blue he had already played for Wales. That honour came in the final game of the 1949 five nations' championship against France at Stade Comtois. It proved to be an auspicious start for the 20-year-old as Wales slumped to their third defeat of the series and picked up the wooden spoon.

He had to wait three years, and 12 games, for his next international, although it proved to be a wholly more agreeable experience. This time Wales ran out 14-3 victors over Ireland at Lansdowne Road; he scored a try and made another, and Wales became winners of the triple crown. He quickly developed into a permanent fixture and eventually captained his coun-

try nine times in 1958 and 1959, leading them to five wins.

Arguably his most famous moment came in the 1953 international at the Arms Park against New Zealand. He had been in the Swansea side that had held the tourists to a 0-0 draw a week earlier, but played a key role in helping Wales to go one better on December 19, 1953.

The game was locked at 8-8 with five minutes to play when Thomas, who had earlier done duty as an emergency wing while Gareth Griffiths was having his dislocated shoulder replaced, snatched up the ball on the All Blacks' 22 and Pretoria.

His 26th and final Welsh cap came against France in 1959 and had a similar result to his debut, a defeat in Paris. No sooner had he hung up his boots than he picked up the pen and began a new career in journalism writing for *The Observer*.

joined the ranks of those Welsh immortals who have played on a winning side against New Zealand.

For Swansea, he played in the sides that fell to narrow defeats against the 1951 Springboks and 1957 Wallabies, but led the Welsh team to a 9-3 triumph over Australia in 1958.

The determination of the man was best epitomised by his refusal to return from the British Lions tour of South Africa in 1955 after having his appendix removed. Far from being held back by the experience, he went on to play a vital role in helping the Lions to share the series, playing in two tests, including the 9-6 win in Pretoria.

His 26th and final Welsh cap came against France in 1959 and had a similar result to his debut, a defeat in Paris. No sooner had he hung up his boots than he picked up the pen and began a new career in journalism writing for *The Observer*.

Clem Thomas was a whole-saler butcher by trade in the family business — indeed one opponent described him as the only man he knew to take his profession onto the field with him. He went on to work as *The Observer's* chief rugby writer, a position he held for almost 35 years. He finished with the paper two years ago and stepped across the broadsheets to write for the *Independent on Sunday*.

He was twice rewarded in the annual Whitbread/Rugby World Honours for his services to journalism and was a character who could light up any press box or press conference. He wrote the book *Welsh Rugby* with Geoff Nicholson in 1980 and was in the process of proof-reading the official history of the British Lions.

He is survived by his four children from his first marriage in 1954 to Anne, and also by his second wife, Joyce, whom he married in 1980. One of his sons is also a Cambridge Blue.



EMILY KNGWARREYE



Emily Kngwarreye, Aboriginal artist, died in hospital in Alice Springs on September 2. She is thought to have been born in about 1910.

programme for the women. They began with batik-making, adapting their traditional body-markings and forms to this medium. Emily's work, even then, stood out for its freedom and vigour.

In 1988-89 the women's group, under a new art adviser, Rodney Gooch, began working with acrylics on canvas, and Emily responded eagerly to this new challenge. It was, she found, a medium more suited to the bold immediacy of her style. From then, up to a few days before her death, she continued to paint with extraordinary power and invention.

Although to European eyes her pictures might appear almost abstract, they in fact depict her country — its animal and vegetable life, its terrain, its mythical origins, its changing patterns, the interweaving life-cycles and mythical meanings.

Emily's painting technique, from the start, was individual and distinctive, marked by boldness of colour and strength of design. Her extraordinary talent was recognised almost at once. In 1990 Emily's work was shown at two very successful one-woman shows in Sydney, and in 1992 she received an Australian Artist's Creative Fellowship from the Government.

Much alarm was occasioned at this time, when Emily (who spoke no English) appeared to think that the \$10,000 award was a sort of retirement present and was contingent upon her stopping painting. Happily, however,

this confusion was soon cleared up. It was fortunate not only for the art world, but



Emily with London gallery owner Rebecca Hossack

also for Emily herself: she loved to paint and even during her period of doubt had continued to work, telling her friends not to tell Paul Keating, then Australian Prime Minister.

By 1993 she had been represented in more than 50 exhibitions around the world. She had her first solo show in Britain in 1994 at the Rebecca Hossack Gallery, London.

In the seven years since Emily began painting, her style grew simpler and more expressive. She shifted from

using great light-filled splashes of colour to a more stark, linear style. Her masterpiece in this manner — *Big Yam Dreaming* — painted in white on a black ground, was recently presented to the National Gallery of Victoria, where it was hailed as Australia's equivalent to Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles*.

A tiny figure — barely five feet high — Emily, painted sitting on the ground, holding the brush in either hand and pushing the paint onto the canvas in bold dabs as she worked with steady concentration from the outside edge of the canvas towards the centre.

Her great success did inevitably bring some problems. There was constant pressure on her to produce, not only from art dealers but also from her own extended family, who, after the Aboriginal fashion, shared in her financial rewards (and it is estimated that she earned as much as \$500,000 a year by her painting). Inevitably, with such demands upon her, she produced some work of lesser quality. And there are even those who see the simplification of her late style as a means of producing work more quickly.

For the most part, however, she loved her success, enjoying the opportunities it gave her to give presents to friends and relatives. She had no children of her own. She continued, until the end, to live the traditional Aboriginal life, gathering food in the bush and sleeping out in her bough shelter at Soakage Bore.

The Ven David Scott, former Archdeacon of Stow, died on August 31 aged 72. He was born on June 19, 1924.

CHORISTER at Westminster School; Trinity Hall, Cambridge; Cuddesdon Theological College, Oxford; curacy at St Mark's, Poole; these are the ingredients for the formation of a Church of England clergyman in the best conventional mould, and David Scott fitted it with distinction.

He was, however, never a conformist. For example, he was in the stream of ex-public school ex-officers who were influenced into the Church's ordained ministry by the powerful combination at Trinity Hall of Lancelot Fleming, Owen Chadwick and Tony Tremlett; but David Scott was exceptionally different. He had registered as a conscientious objector and worked for Italian prisoners-of-war.

After a brief spell in the London University Chaplaincy he became Vicar of Old Brumby in Scunthorpe in

BOB BROWN

Bob Brown, former Labour MP and junior minister, died on September 3 aged 75. He was born on May 16, 1921.

A NEWCASTLE-upon-Tyne MP for more than 20 years and a junior minister in three separate departments during the Wilson and Callaghan Governments, Bob Brown was classic "old" Labour. He believed in loyalty to his leaders but he believed even more firmly in his party's traditional policies, particularly public ownership and partnership with trade unions.

He entered the Commons, like many of his colleagues, through the local government and trade union route. But unlike most of them he had practical experience of manual work. He was a plumber and gas fitter by trade.

Brown joined the Labour Party when he was 16 and served in every capacity from ward worker to constituency agent. He proceeded to Newcastle County Borough Council where he became chief whip. He entered the Commons in 1966 where he immediately became a notable battler for the interests of the North of England. Ironically, in view of Labour's present policies, his then conventional views were regarded as unsatisfactorily right of centre.

Then, in 1966, he inherited the Newcastle West seat of Ernest (later Lord) Popplewell and increased the 1964 majority of 8,454 to 12,217. In the House he was a stout supporter of the Wilson Government against its left-wing critics. He fought vigorously for the rights of elderly and disabled passengers to obtain travel concessions.



were elected to Newcastle County Borough Council, where he played a big part in planning the new Scotswood Bridge.

He switched from Newcastle West to Newcastle in 1983 as a result of boundary changes, and in 1987 he decided to retire from Westminster. He had not lost his interest in politics, however, and became a Newcastle councillor again.

He married Marjorie Hogg in 1945. She survives him together with a son and daughter.

THE VEN DAVID SCOTT

The Ven David Scott, former Archdeacon of Stow, died on August 31 aged 72. He was born on June 19, 1924.

1959. Here, far from settling into the parochial conventions, he helped to initiate a remarkable period of close co-operation across the parishes of the town.

At the heart of this movement was a formidably meeting where the clergy tussled with the radical theology of the Sixties. Scott fought from the conservative corner but he never took shelter in it, and his passion for teamwork helped to draw together men with deep diversities of outlook.

Moving to Boston in 1966, he quickly created a happy staff-team. The Rector of Boston has a weighty civic as well as ecclesiastical responsibility which Scott carried well, but for him it included befriending the cockle-fishermen (he was the only person they would allow on their fishing trips) and working with porto-pickers. He even joined the wildfowlers, complete with gun, though he never returned home with a duck: he was a keen birdwatcher.

When he became Archdeacon of Stow in 1975, it was soon discovered that his slightly

aloof, conventional manner was only the appearance of the man, though he was not to be trifled with. He held his convictions with passion and was quite fearless in expressing them when they were unpopular. He wasted no time on self-indulgence, of attitudes or of ideas, and was sharply witty in debunking them. Yet he was deeply sensitive to genuine suffering and went to great lengths to reach people whom he saw outcast.

His qualities became widely recognised and sought after, and in beyond the Diocese of Lincoln. His appointment as Chaplain to the Queen in 1984 was welcomed as a well-deserved distinction.

He continued to give service of many kinds from his retirement home in Southwell, in particular to the Westminster Old Choristers' Association, the Woodard Schools, and the newly formed Ecclesiastical Law Society, of which he was executive officer in its formative years.

He is survived by his wife Christine and their two adult children.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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DISPICK DESIGNERS

NEWS

Major called as witness in libel case

John Major and Michael Heseltine have been asked to appear as witnesses in a £1 million libel case next month. They have been subpoenaed by *The Guardian* newspaper, along with the Cabinet Secretary Sir Robin Butler and the former Chief Whip Richard Ryder, to give evidence in a case being brought by the Conservative MP Neil Hamilton.

If he attended, Mr Major would be the first Prime Minister to be required to give evidence in court, although his lawyers may contest the subpoena..... Page 1

England return to five nations rugby

The five nations' championship was saved yesterday at a meeting between representatives of England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales. The championship was in danger because the Celtic nations threatened to expel England..... Pages 1, 44

Heart op for Yeltsin

President Yeltsin has announced that he will undergo a heart operation later this month to treat a year-old affliction..... Pages 1, 12

New threat to Kurds

Turkish warplanes have attacked suspected bases of Kurdish rebels inside the safe area of northern Iraq..... Pages 1, 13

Losing their glow

A research project to find ways to raise luminous creatures in captivity has come to a standstill for lack of funds..... Page 1

Tax offensive

Kenneth Clarke led the Tory assault on Labour's tax policy, claiming that the average family will be £700 a year better off by next year..... Page 2

Stolen heart

A teenage girl held hostage with her family for four hours by a gang secretly dated one of the robbers for three weeks before telling police..... Page 3

All in the game

A board game that kept the Romans amused down the centuries has been found laid out and ready to play in a 2,000-year-old burial site in Essex..... Page 3

Diplomat faces jail

Robert Cighlan, a senior British diplomat, faces a seven-year prison sentence for smuggling paedophilic videos into Britain..... Page 5

America bored by Oasis bad boy act

An attempt by Liam Gallagher, the lead singer of Oasis, to extend his notoriety across the Atlantic has fallen flat. Gallagher spat clutched his crotch and swore during an awards ceremony in New York but his antics were largely ignored by the audience and the press, who seemed surprised that he had bothered to show up at all..... Page 10



Warren Christopher, the US Secretary of State, left, with Malcolm Rifkind, the Foreign Secretary, in London yesterday

BUSINESS

Economy: Britain's high streets are now seeing their best business since the late 1980s, according to the CBI..... Page 23

Motor racing: Damon Hill said that his dismissal by the Williams team had only served to increase his determination to win the world drivers' championship..... Page 44

Cricket: Michael Atherton will captain England on their winter tours to Zimbabwe and New Zealand. He has led England 35 times since 1993..... Page 44

Football: The 15 Premiership clubs in the second round of the Coca-Cola Cup have all drawn lower-division opposition. Chelsea visit Blackpool and Middlesbrough go to Hereford..... Page 44

Musical treats: David Freeman stages *The Magic Flute* on the South Bank; while the Albert Hall hears new works by James MacMillan and James Dillon..... Page 32

Pop on Friday: The Pet Shop Boys go to touch South American on their fine new album *Bilingual*, while REM find a new lease of magic in the potent brew of their *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*..... Page 33

SPORT

London: Lomito is delaying the £700 million stockmarket flotation of its hotel division and is considering making a trade sale instead..... Page 23

Bad weather: A sharp increase in worldwide weather claims denied pre-tax profits for Royal and Sun Alliance as it reported its first interim results as a merged company..... Page 23

Markets: The FTSE 100 index rose 14.5 points to close at 3887.2. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from \$1.5658 to \$1.5680 and from DM2.3202 to DM2.3280..... Page 26

London: The English Angleterre, bright, dry, sunny periods. Winds brisk, northeast. Max 19C (66F). Central S England, E Midlands, W Midlands, Channel Isles, SW

ARTS

Dream team: London sees a pair of *Midsummer Night's Dreams*: Yukio Ninagawa's production at the Mermaid and Northern Broadside at the Globe..... Page 31

Second chances: In a new initiative, the British Film Institute is to offer professional public readings of British film scripts awaiting the kiss of life..... Page 31

Musical treats: David Freeman stages *The Magic Flute* on the South Bank; while the Albert Hall hears new works by James MacMillan and James Dillon..... Page 32

Pop on Friday: The Pet Shop Boys go to touch South American on their fine new album *Bilingual*, while REM find a new lease of magic in the potent brew of their *New Adventures in Hi-Fi*..... Page 33

FEATURES

Valerie Grove talks to Antonia Fraser about her much-praised book *The Gunpowder Plot*. "I find the burning of effigies disgusting," she says..... Page 17

Wrong soap: Tony Blair popped into *Coronation Street* last week but, says Candida Crewe, he should have chosen *EastEnders*..... Page 16

Poison pen: Amanda Craig's new book has had writers searching for themselves among the characters..... Page 16

IN THE TIMES

JANE'S WORLD

Rachel Billington on writing the sequel to *Emma*, in the Magazine

WIN A TV

£1,600 television and VCR to be won in 10 issues

the magazine for young Times readers

TV LISTINGS

Preview: More trouble looms for Nigel Le Vaillant's police surgeon, on duty and off. *Dangerfield* (BBC1, 9.30pm). Review: Matthew Bond sees an *EastEnders* star go back to the 1950s..... Page 43

OPINION

Heart and head

President Yeltsin has been brave about his health; but about his political future, he is showing himself to be as nervous as any Bolshevik..... Page 19

Man and minotaur

The decipherment of Linear B was an inspirational act. It happened at around the same time as the first ascent of Everest and caught the same Coronation spirit..... Page 19

Time lords

It might seem perverse for France to be opting out of single European time when it is so insistent that it will be at the rendezvous for the single currency..... Page 19

COLUMNISTS

BERNARD LEVIN

There is no point in going over the details of the people who lived cheek by jowl with her and did not notice the dreadful dying of Karen Morgan; suffice it to say that they must have been blind, deaf and stupid, until they noticed that she was dead..... Page 18

MAGNUS LINKLATER

Words such as "farce", "débâcle", "ridicule", "collapse", "silly" and "incompetent" have been the stuff of headlines. *The Scotsman* called it "a piteous spectacle"; *The Herald* concluded that Labour was gambling with the political future of the country..... Page 18

PATRICK MAYHEW

Events in Northern Ireland over the summer have shown that the old prejudices can still erupt all too readily..... Page 18

OBITUARIES

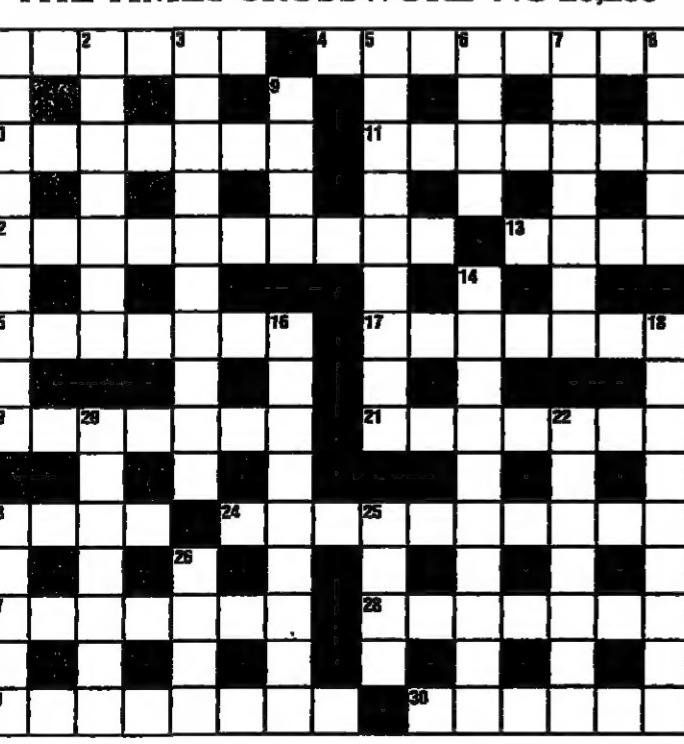
CLEM THOMAS

Clem Thomas, rugby player and journalist; Emily Kingwarrey, Aboriginal artist; Bob Brown, Labor MP and junior minister; The Ven David Scott, Archdeacon of Stow..... Page 21

LETTERS

Funding of the arts; Naval College future; investing in innovation; royal divorce; party democracy; Irish conservation; road deaths; street signs..... Page 19

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,266

**ACROSS**

1 Edging hoop with iron on the outside (6).

4 Victory for Athenians, in the long run (8).

10 A large number failing to finish course of therapy (7).

11 One or two roads (7).

12 Club employee who appreciates a good deal in his job? (10).

13 I have succeeded as a composer (4).

15 Results of explosions in the news (7).

17 Gear engineers installed in alarm (7).

19 Make it come next (7).

21 Mixed fruit flavour the Spanish love (7).

23 State of ignorance that's not fair (4).

24 Badly timed deals disturbed region (6,4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,265

MANICURE CATSUP
O O O F T W U
L I V E R P O O L S T R E E T
O E S S A I D T
C U R R A N T T O R P E D I O
H M G T E S
F I R E S I D E D R A K E
W N R I A
O L D E R T A Y B E R R Y
R A R S Y F
D E C U P L E P A S S F O R
P A T P A E A I
L A B O U R I N T E N S I V E
A E R D T C R N
Y O R K E R W I D E E Y E D

27 Dress uniform? No! (7).

28 Idly play around at this level of society (7).

29 In an excited state, taking a gamble (8).

30 One's not going to be a good long-distance runner (6).

31 DOWN

1 Light up factory with spectacular display (9).

2 Exclusive company pouring out (2-5).

3 Animal protector's retreat after plucky fighting (4,6).

4 Barrow's Shavian production (9).

5 It's a northern-facing wine area (4).

6 Still we hang about (7).

7 Poet's contradictory responses (5).

9 Embarrassing spelling mistake? That's a big blow (4).

10 Everyone knows about this easy crypto (4,6).

11 Party to children not the most important thing (4-5).

12 Performer in the round much more impressive than Petrovich? (4-5).

13 Composer about to go on ship (7).

22 Demand pound - the ultimate in usury - no more or less (7).

23 House where it's okay for Russians to take a drink (5).

25 Section of newspaper writer works on (4).

26 Formal order - about one gross (4).

Times Two Crossword, page 44

TIMES WEATHER

For the latest regional 24-hour forecast, dial 0891 500 followed by the appropriate code:
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Kent/Surrey/Berkshire 702
Essex/Suffolk/Cambs 703
Devon & Cornwall 704
Wiltshire/Gloucs/Avon/Somerset 705
Beds/Herts/Bucks 706
Norfolk/Suffolk/Cambs 707
West Mid & SW Gloucs & Gwent 708
Central Midlands 709
East Midlands 710
S. & H. Pennines 711
Dyfed & Powys 712
Gwynedd & Cleddau 713
Wales 714
W. & S. Yorks & Derbyshire 715
N.E. England 716
W. & S. Lancs & Cheshire 717
S.W. Scotland 718
W. Central Scotland 719
Edin & Lothian & Borders 720
Glasgow & E. Highlands 721
N.W. Scotland 722
Orkney & Shetland 723
N. Ireland 724
Western Isles 725
Met Office 726
New Moon September 12
London 7.35 pm to 6.23 am
Bristol 7.45 pm to 6.33 am
Cardiff 7.55 pm to 6.39 am
Manchester 7.46 pm to 6.29 am
Penzance 7.56 pm to 6.46 am

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Sun rises: 6.21 am
Sun sets: 7.35 pm
Moon rises: 3.53 pm
Moon sets: 12.09 am
New Moon September 12
London 7.35 pm to 6.23 am
Bristol 7.45 pm to 6.33 am
Cardiff 7.55 pm to 6.39 am
Manchester 7.46 pm to 6.29 am
Penzance 7.56 pm to 6.46 am

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AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm b=bright; c=cloudy; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=ducks; f=fog; g=gentle; h=gentle; i=heavy; m=moderate; n=none; s=snow; u=sun; v=wind; w=wind

Sun Rain: 22 0.01 19 88 c
London: 23 0.01 19 88 c
Aberdeen: 24 0.01 18 84 c
Aberystwyth: 25 0.01 18 84 c
Belfast: 26 0.01 18 84 c
Birmingham: 27 0.01 20 85 c
Boscombe: 28 0.01 20 85 c
Bristol: 29 0.01 20 85 c
Brixton: 30 0.01 20 85 c
Budapest: 31 0.01 20 85 c
Bangkok: 32 0.01 20 85 c
Berlin: 33 0.01 20 85 c
Barbados: 34 0.01 20 85 c
Bermuda: 35 0.01 20 85 c